

The Joy of Hope | Making the Dead Alive | The Dead are Dead | Confessions of a Homeboy

THE SOWER

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WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DIE?



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The Fear of Death

by Gary Theisen

Death. Now there's a cheery topic for this issue of *The Sower*. And yet, unless the Lord gathers us together while we are still alive, death is something we will all experience. It has been said that the two absolutes in life are death and taxes, and while we'll never be able to completely understand something as frightening as the U.S. Tax Code, we need not be ignorant about death.

In today's world, the subject of death brings to mind a myriad of impressions left by hours of cinematic, television, DVD, and internet horror. The ever-present cop/trauma "reality" show demonstrates the many ways we humans can die. And works of dark fiction often portray "dead" people as having the pesky habit of returning to "life" to terrify the living. The end result of all this seems to be confusion, and fear of the unknown. What happens to me if I die? Do I go to "heaven," or "hell," or an intermediate holding tank somewhere in between?

Hebrews 2:14 and 15 tells us that it is the Devil who murders people, and that Jesus came to conquer death and free "...those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death." Fear paralyzes us, it blocks love (1 John 4:18), it brings torment, and the fear of death often causes one to avoid the subject altogether. Unless we seek, and find, truth, we remain in bondage, for only truth can make us free (John 8:32). Scripture tells us that we need not fear death because we have a Savior who through his own death has overcome death, and who in the future will destroy both death and its author, the Devil.

Instilling the fear of death in people is one way Satan does what he does best: steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10). As God's people, we are called to be the antidote to the Devil's power in this world. Our presence should bring a breath of new life to people. In contrast to Satan's methods, our mission must be to "give, heal, and make whole." It is imperative that we give freely, as we have freely received from the loving hand of our heavenly Father.

Our goal at Spirit & Truth Fellowship is to present the whole truth of God's Word to the best of our ability. This truth includes uncomfortable and controversial topics such as death and its aftermath, and it brings comfort instead of confusion. When we realize that Jesus Christ conquered death, and that one day death and its sting will be no more, the fear of death disappears. We Christians can know for sure that we will avoid the final death and instead be in Paradise with our Father and our brother Jesus Christ for the rest of time. That's real comfort.

Death is a good topic for *The Sower* because for us Christians it brings to mind *resurrection life*. My prayer is that the truth about how Jesus Christ has conquered death will bring you greater freedom for a victorious life in him.

Your brother,

Gary

The Joy of Hope

by John A. Lynn

“HE’S DEAD.” “SHE’S DEAD.” How many millions of human hearts have been torn asunder by those words, spoken by a doctor, a state trooper, or a relative in regard to one’s wife, husband, baby, child, mother, father, brother, sister, or best friend? The thudding finality of the word *dead* is hard to describe.

So is the absolute contrast between life and death. One moment the person is warm, vibrant, looking into your eyes with love, touching you, laughing, exhibiting all his or her uniqueness in relating to you; and, if tragedy strikes without warning, shortly thereafter he or she is cold, motionless, oblivious to your pleas for them to speak to you, and, cell by cell, beginning to shrink away to nothingness. So incredible are the joys of life, so horrible are the pangs of death.

The Definition of Death

Given our experiential knowledge of the difference between life and death, common sense would dictate that a person cannot be both dead and alive at the same time and the definitions of these terms dictate the same. For example, Dictionary.com Unabridged defines death as follows:

“the end of life; the total and permanent cessation of all the vital functions of an organism.”

This standard definition of death fits perfectly with the biblical usage of the term. In Scripture, a human is an integrated being who is either dead or alive.

Beginning in Genesis, the Word of God clearly shows us that death was never a part of our loving heavenly Father’s intention for mankind. To the contrary, had Adam and Eve obeyed His simple directives, they would have produced an everlasting race on a perfect earth. That is, of course, exactly what “the Last Adam,” the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, will one day bring to pass, and he is able to do so primarily because he himself tasted death, and conquered it. From its inception, death has been, and still is, an *enemy* (1 Cor. 15:26). For a thorough exposition of the subject of what happens to people if they die, see our book (on page 3 of the enclosed price list); *Is There Death After Life?* and/or go to TruthOrTradition.com/death

To illustrate the spiritual battle that has raged since Genesis 3 and will not end until Revelation 21, the Word of God sets forth a number of similar antitheses: God vs. the Devil, good vs. evil, truth vs. lies, light vs. darkness, righteousness vs. unrighteousness, life vs. death. In each of these dualities, understanding the dreadful reality of the latter magnifies the glorious reality of the former. For example, if we do not get in touch with the sin that dwells in us, we will not recognize our need for a Savior from that sin. Likewise, if we do not grasp how horrible death is, we cannot fully appreciate how magnificent life is, in particular everlasting life via resurrection.

While God’s Word magnifies these distinctions, Satan’s goal is to blur them. Herein lies the statement of the problem, so to speak: he has been extremely successful. Far more people, including most Christians, believe a lie than the truth. That is why, to adequately set forth the magnificent truth about resurrection life, we must first probe the lies about death. Then we can fully understand the *joy of hope* that is to be the foundation of each Christian’s life, that which keeps us going through all trial and tribulation.

The First Lie

As the antithesis of God, the Author of Life, Satan is the author of death (John 10:10; Heb. 2:14). As “the father of lies” (John 8:44), he vigorously promotes two lies about death that, if believed, have an extremely

detrimental effect on the quality of people's lives. He told the first of those two lies in his original conversation with mankind, when he said to Eve: "You will not surely die..." (Gen. 3:4).

In context, what was he saying? That there is really no such thing as death; a person can disobey God and live forever, which is just the opposite of what God says in Romans 6:23: "...the wages of sin is death..." It is sad to say that Satan's relentless promotion of that lie has resulted in even the vast majority of Christians believing it. Think about it: most Christians are taught that wicked people will be consciously tormented forever in "hell." Is that or is that not everlasting life? It's a *crummy* life, but it *is* everlasting.

The Second Lie

The second lie Satan promulgates is that *God* causes people's deaths (see our book, listed on page 3 of the enclosed price list, *Don't Blame God* and/or visit TruthOrTradition.com/DBG). In the Christian Church, he couches this lie in euphemistic language like, "God called him home" or "He graduated" or "He's in a better place" or "He went to be with Jesus." Those phrases may sound appealing, but they do not begin to assuage the anguish of the husband or wife or child left behind, and, in fact, often add a burden of guilt. When a well meaning friend tells the mother of a teenager killed in a wreck, "It's okay, she's with Jesus," the mother may well feel like screaming, "It's NOT okay! I want her HERE!" And then she may think that is selfish and feel guilt on top of her grief.

To promote any of his lies, Satan must see to it that the meanings of words are changed from their biblical, and common sense, definitions. Instead of meaning, "the end or the absence of life," death for many Christians now means, "separated from God." Indeed, death does separate us from God, but that is because we are *dead*. "Orthodox" Christianity would have us believe that no one ever really dies. If I leave my wife, Elizabeth, at home to go do an errand, I am separated from her, but obviously not dead. No, dead means "not living," and separated means "away from."

Satan's lie that there is no such thing as actual death requires also that the meanings of the biblical words "soul" and "spirit" be changed. The consequence of Satan's lie is the erroneous teaching that only one's *body* dies, while his soul or spirit goes on either to heaven or hell, or someplace in between. If we are to understand the truth about what happens when a person dies, it is vital to realize that Scripture never defines soul or spirit as a personal, conscious, incorporeal entity. In the biblical Hebraic understanding, man is an integrated being of body, mind, and an animating life force. Without the latter, he is dead.

The Devil always does his best to demean Jesus Christ, for whom his hatred is unbridled (2 Cor. 4:3 and 4). How does the lie that death is not the end of one's existence do that? It diminishes the magnitude of Jesus' monumental faith in his Father, which was evidenced by his willingly giving up his life and trusting God to raise him from the dead. Jesus knew that death was real, and that if God did not keep His promise to raise him up, he would never exist again. That is one reason why he so agonized in Gethsemane.

Diluting the Resurrection

Chiefly, the lie that some part of us lives on after the body dies terribly dilutes the glory of *resurrection*. If Jesus did not really die, but was still living in some form, his subsequent bodily resurrection was no big deal. Of greater significance to you and me is his promise to raise us Christians from the dead and give us new bodies. What's the point, if we are already enjoying everlasting life with him in heaven? If death is not real, resurrection is superfluous. And if we think that "death" is only "crossing the bar" or "passing on" ("pass away" is accurate), might we not more easily give up the fight for our precious life? Just as truth has practical benefits, error has practical consequences.

One reason for the smorgasbord of suppositions about what life after death is like is that death is absolutely terrifying to mankind in general. Though Satan has done a good job of euphemizing this mortal enemy, and due to believing his lie some people seem cavalier about dying. The idea of not existing is far more fearful and

motivating than most people realize (see our booklet, on page 3 of the enclosed pricelist, *The Death Penalty*. You can read it online at TruthOrTradition.com/DeathPenalty).

The “Sleep” Metaphor

Even for a Christian, who has God’s promise of everlasting life via resurrection, death is a gruesome reality. Therefore God graciously employs a figure of speech to describe it, one that takes the edge off its horror. He refers to death as “sleep,” and we find this metaphor in the Old Testament and in the four Gospels, as well as in the Church Epistles. When the mighty angel was telling Daniel about the future of Israel and of the two resurrections to come (the just and the unjust), he said:

Daniel 12:1 and 2

(1) “At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book— will be delivered.

(2) Multitudes who **sleep in the dust of the earth** will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.

Jesus Christ echoed this metaphor in talking about Lazarus, who had died:

John 11:11-14

(11) After he had said this, he went on to tell them, “**Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.**”

(12) His disciples replied, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.”

(13) Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

(14) So then he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead,

And you may well be familiar with this magnificent passage from the Church Epistles, that body of Scripture written specifically to Christians, people who are **born again of incorruptible seed** and thus guaranteed everlasting life:

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

(13) Brothers, **we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep**, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.

(14) We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have **fallen asleep** in him.

(15) According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have **fallen asleep**.

(16) For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

(17) After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

(18) Therefore encourage each other with these words.

Verse 13 is one of a handful of places in Scripture exhorting us not to be ignorant about a particular subject. It makes sense then that the Devil does what he can to keep people ignorant (without knowledge) about this topic. Let us dissect these brilliant verses so that we can assimilate what God wants us to.

First, we see death equated to sleep. Then we are exhorted not to grieve like people without the hope of everlasting life through Christ. Grief is a godly and necessary process, but our grief is tempered by our hope of everlasting life underlying it. Verse 14 is talking about the Lord Jesus, at God’s direction, bringing Christians back to heaven with him by raising them out from among the dead, and verse 15 says (and verse 17 confirms)

that those Christians still living will, as per 1 Corinthians 15:51-58, also then be given new bodies.

Verse 16 is both remarkable and appropriate, in its context. Jesus is shouting, the archangel is apparently harmonizing, and someone is blowing the trumpet of God. Gosh, that's a lot of noise. Why, *it's enough to wake the dead!* That's the point.

Why is the sleep metaphor so valid, and so comforting? Well, let's think about *sleep*. It is a *temporary* period of *unconsciousness* that ends with an *awakening*. For the Christian, so is death. When you go to sleep at night, the next thing you know it is morning. So for a Christian who dies, his next conscious thought will be seeing the Lord Jesus in the air at his appearing.

How simple is that? Think about a child at the funeral of his grandfather. If there is an open casket, what does it look to him like his grandfather is doing? *Sleeping*. So we might tell him: "We are sad because it is like Grandpa has gone to sleep for a long time, and we're going to put him in the ground, but one day Jesus will come and wake him up, and then you can see him again, and none of us will ever die after that." Can he grasp that and take comfort in it? Yes. But how about this: "Well, Grandpa's body is dead, but don't feel bad, because his soul, or his spirit, is still alive and is now in heaven with Jesus. Grandpa may be able to see you, but you can't see him or talk to him now, though one day you will." That theology is difficult for children, and adults, to find satisfying, either emotionally or intellectually.

True Biblical Comfort

Verse 18 is short, sweet, and significant in part for what it does *not* say. Note that it does not say that the way to comfort someone who has lost a loved one is by telling them that the person who died is now in heaven with Jesus. Certainly people who believe that do find some solace in it, but, given that it is not the truth, whatever comfort they have pales in comparison to the true comfort that Jesus Christ, the "...firstborn from among the dead..." (Col. 1:18), will in turn raise to life all who believe in him (1 Cor. 15:20-23). In the meantime, they are "resting in peace." Think of their joy when the "alarm clock" goes off!

If you are not a Christian, Romans 10:9 tells you how to "Get a(n) (after)life." Confessing Jesus Christ as your Lord and believing that God raised him from the dead is the only way to be saved from sin and death and have God's guarantee that the Lord Jesus will one day raise you up to life everlasting.

If you are a Christian, your hope of everlasting life is not death, because death is not a friend that introduces one to Jesus. Rather, it introduces you to darkness and oblivion, for that is how death is described in Scripture. Death is an enemy that ends your life, and we must fight this enemy with all we have. God's Word makes it clear that *many* Christians will be alive at the appearing of Christ, and since we don't know when that will be, you might be among them. *You might never die!*

Even if you do fall asleep before Christ comes for the Church, you can "rest assured" that at your next conscious moment you will see the smiling face of your Lord Jesus, who will have given you new life. And he will thereafter reward you for your labor of love on his behalf. That hope is the basis of our joy. "Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain" (1 Cor. 15:58). Amen.

**Read online at
TruthOrTradition.com/JoyOfHope**

The Vine

Confessions of a Homeboy

by Dan Gallagher

The other day I was talking with a good friend when he said, “I have to confess, I guess I’m a homeboy.” I was a little confused, not really knowing what he meant. I knew that “Homeboy” is a slang term sometimes used by the younger generation when they refer to their good friends. The problem was that I am in my mid-fifties and so is my friend, and I am not really used to hearing one of my friends use that term. Then it hit me—he was referring to his affection and fondness for our local home church, meaning that he really prefers the intimate home setting instead of the traditional church.

His comment sunk in deeply and caused me to reflect on my fifty-plus years of Christian experience. I was raised in a large denominational setting with an emphasis on ceremony and tradition, and I admit that I still have a fondness for stained-glass windows, incense, and Gregorian chanting. I left that system more than three decades ago and have since experienced a wide range of meeting, preaching, and praise and worship styles, which I love. Given my exposure to such great diversity, I must confess that, like my friend, I am a homeboy at heart. So what exactly is it that I find so attractive about a home fellowship?

A few years ago we decided to start Sunday morning church services at Camp Vision. Like most traditional churches, we have incorporated congregational praise, worship, prayer, a teaching/preaching from the Scriptures, plus other customary practices. Our attendance does not vary much, but does include occasional visitors. For a while I have felt that something is missing, and have been searching my heart to see if there is something I should be doing differently, but I couldn’t put my finger on what I was feeling.

One evening I called to check on someone who had stopped coming to church about a month earlier. He confided that he was feeling isolated and alone, and that church was not working for him. He said he “needed to feel a greater connection to others.” I knew instantly that he was expressing the exact same thing I was longing for.

I know there is a time and a place for large congregational meetings. Large meetings can serve a godly purpose, but there is also a need for smaller gatherings. The answer was not to shrink our Sunday church services into a home, but to add some weekly home meetings. We knew we needed to provide lots of time and space for heart connection, so we decided to start each night with a community meal, a “communion” if you will. Lori and I launched our Wednesday night home church with Jesus’ promise that “...where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them” (Matt. 18:20).

Knowing that the Lord Jesus has given spiritual gifts to each person who has made him Lord, we decided to focus on the uniqueness of everyone in the fellowship by emphasizing our individual gifts. In fact, we tell everyone to come prepared to participate with a gift, which can be a psalm, a sharing, a blessing, a prayer, or an act of service. It is great to see how the Lord works through each person in his or her own special way. He is the center of our meeting, and the Word of God is always our rule for faith and practice.

Last week one person opened by sharing how he/she was hurting about the recent death of a young person he/she knew. Another spoke up and admitted that he/she too knew the deceased but had never seized the opportunity to lead him to Christ. That led to our praying for comfort followed by a discussion on the Hope. Someone else shared about receiving the financial answer to a long season of prayer. Lori and I shared that we have recently had some family setbacks that require us to provide additional help with three of our

grandchildren (ages 2, 3, and 4). Another said she had been praying for part-time work, and it turned out that she was an answer to our prayer for help with the grandkids. I have always said the Lord specializes in making one move that answers multiple calls, somewhat like tossing up one stone and hitting ten birds. I reminded everyone of Nehemiah's words, "...Don't be afraid...Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome..."(Neh. 4:14). Then, knowing some of the deep needs of everyone, we had reason to unite in prayer, praise and worship, song and encouragement.

Our home church is an ongoing experiment of living out the love of Christ. We do not follow a set program, or have a teaching, but something is always taught. We focus on whatever we perceive the need to be, and allow everyone time to present the gift of themselves. It may be an evening of prayer, song, or healing, but our home church is always a time of togetherness and heart connection. I believe I have found what my heart was missing. Like my friend, I too must confess, I really am a "homeboy."

**For more on our Fellowship Community visit
TruthOrTradition.com/community**

The Contender

Making the Dead Alive

by John W. Schoenheit

The Bible teaches that when a person dies he is dead in every way. His body is dead, and his soul and spirit die also. He is not alive in any form, in heaven or elsewhere. The human body cannot live without a soul, and the soul and spirit cannot live apart from a body. A “person” is an integrated whole. God has designed us so that our parts work in a totally integrated way, and not by themselves. This is one reason why the majority of the uses of “soul” in the Bible do not mean “soul” in the sense of the life force of the body, but rather the entire person. Thus, when Acts 2:43 (KJV) says that “...fear came upon every **soul**...,” it means fear came upon every **person**. Once a person dies, he remains dead until he is raised from the dead by the Lord.

It is not our purpose in this short article to go over the clear verses that show that a dead person is dead in every way, or to explain the difficult verses on the subject of what happens when we die, because we do that in our book, *Is There Death After Life?* (see page 3 of the enclosed price list). Rather, we will focus on understanding a major reason why there was so much confusion at the time of Christ about what happened to people when they died. This confusion shows up vividly in the division between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Pharisees asserted that after death the soul lived apart from the body and went to a place of either torture or bliss, while the Sadducees thought that death was the end of life totally, and even denied the resurrection.

In order to understand the confusion existing at the time of Christ concerning the state of the dead, we must understand what the Greeks believed about what happened when people died. An important part of the Greek religion and philosophy was the belief that each person has a soul that is immortal. In fact, the modern Christian concept of the “immortal soul” does not come from the Bible, but from Greek philosophy.

What the Greeks Believed

We must be careful when we generalize about what the Greeks believed, because they were like modern Christians—there is much we agree about, but there are also very distinct differences in what we believe. In general, Greeks believed the soul was immortal, and some believed that humans, animals, and even plants have an immortal soul. To give us an idea of some of the different beliefs about the soul, let us look at four that were held among the Greeks.

1. Some believed that once a person died his soul went to “*Hades*,” the Underworld, for a period of purification, then entered a new body, a cycle that was repeated for eons until that soul was in a completely virtuous person, at which point the transmigration ended and the soul could enter a blessed place, sometimes known as the Blest Isles or Elysian Fields. (It is important that we realize that for most Greeks, *Hades* was not a place of torture, but a gloomy place where the immortal souls of the dead dwelled).
2. Some believed that when a person died his soul went to *Hades* and faced judgment. If it was found guilty it was punished, which lasted, like the soul itself, forever (this belief most naturally lent itself to the development of the orthodox Christian doctrine of burning in “hell” forever). If the soul was not found guilty, it might wander in *Hades*, the Underworld, also called the Land of Shades, or it might return in another person.
3. Some believed that if the dead body was not taken care of properly when the person died, the immortal

soul would wander the earth, possibly even as a ghost, revenging itself upon mankind.

4. Some believed what Homer wrote, that the soul of an especially heinous person suffered punishment in *Hades*, while the souls of the rest of humanity simply suffered the gloomy fate of wandering endlessly in the dark underworld.¹

What is Hades?

In Greek mythology, *Hades* was the god of the Underworld, who oversaw the souls of the dead that resided there. Eventually, the name of the god *Hades* was given to the Underworld itself, so that it was then also called *Hades*. Greek writers wrote about the Underworld, *Hades*, but most of the writing was not meant to be a doctrinal presentation. Rather, it was stories and legends of gods and heroes who went there for various reasons, and there are many differences in their stories about what *Hades* is like. There is, however, one very important similarity: the disembodied souls there were all alive. No immortal soul in *Hades* was dead. In fact, because the standard Greek belief was that the soul was immortal, no one in Greek mythology ever died. Bodies died, but the “person” lived on in the form of a disembodied soul.

Knowing what the Greeks believed about life after death is very important, because, in 332 BC Alexander the Great conquered Israel, and for more than 150 years the Greeks controlled Jerusalem and Israel. Through the years, Greek thought and religion deeply influenced Jewish culture. By 250 BC there were so many Jews who spoke Greek and not Hebrew that the Old Testament was translated into Greek, in a version we now call the *Septuagint*. The Greek vocabulary in the *Septuagint* drove Greek thought even more deeply into the Jewish culture.

One area of Jewish thought and culture that was greatly influenced by the Greeks was the state of the dead. The Hebrew Bible made it clear that the dead were dead in every way. That was the reason the Sadducees believed that when a person died he or she was dead in every sense of the word, and not alive in any form. The real problem with their belief was that it did not take into account the Old Testament teachings of the resurrection from the dead.² Thus, the Sadducees had a dismal and gloomy belief system that had no future joyous hope, but they were right about what happened to people when they died—they are not alive in any form.

Alice Turner writes in her book, *The History of Hell*:

The Jews, judged solely by the evidence of the Old Testament, were either the least morbid or the least imaginative of the Mediterranean peoples. Unlike their neighbors, they had no relationship with the dead; they did not worship them, sacrifice to them, visit them, hope to reunite with them in the afterlife, nor anticipate any kind of interaction with Yahweh after death...³

Turner’s observations are right on target. The Old Testament teaches that the dead are dead, so there was no reason to worship them or sacrifice to them, nor was there any thought of uniting with them “in the afterlife.” In fact, God strictly forbids trying to contact the dead, because that only opens the door for demons to impersonate the dead and cause harm (Deut. 18:11). The Sadducees recognized that the major difference between what they taught and what Jesus taught concerned the resurrection from the dead, so they tried to poke holes in his belief about the resurrection. They asked him, if a woman had seven husbands, whose wife she would be in the resurrection. Jesus did not state or imply that the woman or her dead husbands were alive in any way, but rather said that “in the resurrection” there is no marriage (Matt. 22:23-32).

What is Sheol?

The Hebrew text of the Old Testament tells us that when a person dies he goes to “*Sheol*.” *Sheol* is not “a grave,” i.e., a physical place where the body is laid. A physical grave is *qeber* in Hebrew. Neither is *Sheol* the same as “dead” (Hebrew: *muth*), which is the absence of life. Neither Greek nor English have an equivalent

word to *Sheol*. It refers not to the place where the dead are buried (a grave), but to the state of being dead. We might refer to it as “gravedom” (the realm and dominion of the grave), or “the” grave, versus “a” grave.

That the Hebrew language has a specific word for the state of being dead or the dominion of death is very important, because it recognizes the existence of the person while affirming that he is dead. We really cannot do that in English. If we say in English, “John is dead,” that is a fact, but it can also mean that John will never exist in the future. Thus, an atheist might say that John is dead, and believe that when John died his existence ended as well. However, if a person is in *Sheol*, he is dead and not alive in any form, but “he” still exists, which is why “he” can be raised from the dead.

E. W. Bullinger wrote about *Sheol*:

The student will find that “THE grave,” taken literally as well as figuratively, will meet all the requirements of the Hebrew *Sheol*: not that *Sheol* means so much specifically a grave, as generically THE grave. Holy Scripture is all sufficient to explain the word *Sheol* to us. If we inquire of it in the above list of occurrences of the word *Sheol*, it will teach (a) That as to *direction*, it is down. (b) That as to *place*, it is in the earth. (c) That as to *nature*, it is put for *the state of death*. Not the *act* of dying, for which we have no English word, but the *state* or duration of death.... *Sheol* therefore means *the state of death*; or *the state of the dead*, of which the *grave* is a tangible evidence. It has to do only with the dead. It may sometimes be personified and represented as speaking, as other inanimate things are. It may be represented by a coined word, Grave-dom, as meaning the dominion or power of *the grave*. (d) As to *relation*, it stands in *contrast* with the state of the living (Deut. 30:15 and 19; 1 Sam. 2:6-8). It is never once connected with living, except by contrast. ... (f) And, finally, as to *duration*, the dominion of *Sheol* or the grave will continue until, and end only with, *resurrection*, which is the only exit from it (see Hosea 13:14; etc. and compare Ps. 16:10 with Acts 2:27 and 31, 13:35).⁴

Scripture is very clear that when a person dies and goes to *Sheol* his activity ceases:

Ecclesiastes 9:10 (ESV)⁵

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.

There is no knowledge or thinking in *Sheol*, so there certainly is no rejoicing. This verse is not speaking only of a person’s body, as if the body went to *Sheol* but the soul was either in heaven with God or suffering in Hell. It is the “person,” including his soul, who goes to *Sheol* when he dies.

Psalms 89:48 (ESV)

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

Many of us have so much trouble in life that sometimes we just wish it were over, that we could rest in the sleep of death and be awakened by Jesus at the Rapture. Job was no different. He had so much trouble that he thought about resting in death until the resurrection.

Job 14:10-14

(10) But man dies and is laid low; he breathes his last and is no more.

(11) As water disappears from the sea or a riverbed becomes parched and dry,

(12) so man lies down and does not rise; till the heavens are no more, men will not awake or be roused from their sleep.

(13) If only you would hide me in the grave [*Sheol*] and conceal me till your anger has passed! If only you would set me a time and then remember me!

(14) If a man dies, will he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait for my renewal to come.

There is tremendous truth in the above verses. When people die, they are asleep in death, not alive with God. Job was in such misery that he longed for rest, to be hidden in *Sheol*. He certainly did not want to be in a place where his soul wandered in the dark and gloom, without knowledge of God. Who would wish for that? On the other hand, if Job believed that when he died his soul or spirit went to heaven or a wonderful place, he would not have spoken of sleeping in death and waiting for his renewal to come. There is no life in *Sheol*; people sleep in death and await the resurrection, and that is what Job wanted—to rest from his misery. We must pay attention to the fact that if Job thought his soul or spirit would live in a blessed place after he died, he would not have said what he did.

The Dead where Made Alive

Great confusion about the state of the dead was introduced into Old Testament theology and Jewish thinking when the *Septuagint*, the Greek Old Testament, was translated for Greek-speaking Jews, because the Hebrew word “*Sheol*” was translated into the Greek word “*Hades*.” In *Sheol* everyone was dead, but in *Hades* everyone was alive. Thus, by the stroke of a translator’s pen, the dead were made alive.

We do not know why the translators used *Hades* in the Septuagint. Perhaps after some 75 years of Greek dominance they had been so influenced by Greek thought that they believed the dead were alive, and thought they were only clarifying the situation for the Greek-speaking Jews. Perhaps they felt “*Hades*” was the best word they could choose, because the Greek language did not have a word equivalent to “*Sheol*.” We do not know the reason, but we know the result: the Bible of every Greek-speaking Jew suddenly read that after a person died, his soul stayed alive and went to the Underworld. No wonder that by the time of Christ there was confusion about the state of the dead. No wonder Jesus spent the opening part of his first public sermon, the Sermon on the Mount, speaking about the future hope of the people of God.⁶

What the Jews believed at the time of Christ was very important, because as the first-century Church developed, the Christians were converts from two main groups, Jews and Greeks. The Greeks believed in an immortal soul, and that everyone was alive after they died. Many of the Jews, especially those who read the *Septuagint*, believed the same thing. Therefore it is not hard to see how the modern orthodox belief of an immortal soul living on after the body dies came into Christianity.

Interestingly, we have had the same problem in English as the Jews had 250 years before Christ. Just as there was no Greek equivalent to the Hebrew word “*Sheol*,” so there is no English equivalent. Thus “*Sheol*” is sometimes translated “hell” in the *King James Version*, which is read by many Protestants, and also sometimes translated “hell” in the *Douay-Rheims Bible* read by many Roman Catholics (cp. Deut. 32:22; Job 26:6; Ps. 9:17; Prov. 5:5, 9:18, 15:11; Isa. 28:15; in both versions). When the average Christian reads those versions, he does not see that the dead are dead and in *Sheol*. What he learns is that what he was taught in church is “confirmed” in the Bible: that “Hell” is a place where the souls of the wicked dead go (for further study on “hell,” please visit TruthOrTradition.com/hell).

It is a sad fact for readers of the English Bible that the English versions that use “Hell” to translate “*Sheol*” are actually more confusing than the *Septuagint*. That is because the *Septuagint* uses “*Hades*” as the translation of “*Sheol*” every time, so someone reading the *Septuagint* and thinking seriously about what it says would see some contradictions and start to ask questions. In contrast, the *King James Version*, for example, sometimes translates “*Sheol*” as “hell,” sometimes as the “grave,” and sometimes as “pit,” depending on the context, so the English reader would never know to ask the right questions that would lead to the conclusion that the dead are not alive after all.

Thankfully, some modern versions, like the ESV, recognize that there is no English equivalent to *Sheol*, and thus are simply transliterating *Sheol* when it appears, forcing the English reader to get to know what “*Sheol*” means. Of course, people who already believe that *Sheol* is a place where one’s soul goes to live when his body dies will still be confused. But those students who take the time to look up all the uses of *Sheol* and see how it is used in the Bible will realize that it is the dominion of death, the place we, including our souls, all go if we die. Although there is no consciousness for the dead, the Lord Jesus remembers those who are part of his Body, and he will one day raise them out of *Sheol*, out of the state of death, back to life, a life much more vibrant and joyful than the one we have now.

Notes:

1. Will Durant, *The Life of Greece* (Simon and Schuster, New York, 1939), pp. 137, 165, 190, 311 and 312, 516 and 517.
2. A reason for that is that the Sadducees based their belief system on only the five books of Moses (Genesis-Deuteronomy), which they claimed have no reference to the resurrection. That is why when Jesus answered them about the resurrection, he mentioned Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matt. 22:32). Because he knew that any reference to the resurrection outside of the books of Moses, such as Ezekiel 37, would be immediately rejected as inauthentic.
3. Alice Turner, *The History of Hell* (Harcourt Brace & Company, New York, 1993), p. 40.
4. Bullinger, E.W. *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament*. Samuel Bagster and Sons Ltd., London, Tenth Edition, 1971.
5. Scripture quotations marked (ESV) are taken from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version™ © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. All rights reserved.
6. See our book, on page 3 of the enclosed price list, *The Christian’s Hope: The Anchor of the Soul* (Christian Educational Services, Indianapolis, IN, 2004), Chapter 8, pp. 137-148. For further study on the Christian’s Hope visit TruthOrTradition.com/hope

Available online at TruthOrTradition.com/sheol

The Dead Are Dead (Until the Rapture or Resurrection)

by John W. Schoenheit

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

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.

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 sperms 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.¹

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 say “soul” when the verse refers to humans, but use other English words such as “creature,” “thing,” “life,” etc., when the verse refers to animals.² 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.³ Their body decays, and their soul is gone. What we need to understand is that the Bible says people and animals are alike in that when they die, their body decays and returns to dust, and their soul dies too. That is one reason why there are verses, some of which we will see in this article, that say that when a person dies, his soul is in “Sheol,” the grave or the state of being dead.

Just as the soul gives us physical life, the gift of holy spirit from God gives us spiritual life. 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,” the body animated by the soul. Our holy spirit was not alive with God before we became a 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.⁴ 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.

If we die, the holy spirit “returns” to God (Eccles. 12:7). Since God is everywhere, that most likely means that He remembers us and will re-energize our bodies with spirit at the Rapture. Another possibility is that God simply reclaims the spiritual life force He put in us. In any case, the holy spirit God gave us 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.

The Bible has a significant number of verses that let us know that when a person dies he is dead and awaiting the Rapture or resurrection.⁵ Many are self-explanatory, while some need some explanation to get the most from them. It is not the purpose of this short article to replace much larger books on the state of the dead, nor can we mention every verse or argument that supports the teaching that the dead are dead, or give an answer to the more difficult verses on the subject [For further study on these verses visit TruthOrTradition.com/difficult].⁶ In fact, we have tried to print only the relevant part of each Scripture section, saving space by leaving out parts of verses, so it will be helpful if you read these verses in your own Bible for a more complete understanding of them in their contexts. In this article we will give some of the important verses and pieces of evidence that the dead are not alive in any form, but are awaiting being raised from the grave.

The dead are in the grave, not in heaven or “hell.”

The verses that follow focus 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.⁷

Deuteronomy 31:16 (KJV)⁸

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

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.⁹ “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, 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:14, 5:10). The fuller metaphor of sleeping with one’s ancestors occurs in 2 Samuel 7:12, 1 Kings 1:21, and Acts 13:36 of King David.

Job 7:21 (ESV)¹⁰

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

Job 14:12-14 (ESV)

(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) makes no sense if he believed that at his death he would be with God in heaven or in a good place.¹¹

Psalm 6:5 (ESV)

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 (ESV)

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

Psalm 30:9 (ESV)

“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 (ESV)

(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 [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. It is not immortal, so it dies when the person dies. Christians who die remain in *Sheol*, the state of being dead, until God ransoms us from the grave at the Rapture. At that time God re-empowers our bodies, but not with the soul life we have now.

Psalm 89:48 (ESV)

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

Psalm 115:17 (ESV)

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 (ESV)

(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, no wisdom.

Isaiah 26:19 (ESV)

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 (ESV)

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.

Daniel 12:1 and 2 (ESV)

(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 would awake in the resurrection, of which Scripture tells us there will be two: the Just and the Unjust (John 5:29; Acts 24:15; Rev. 20:5 and 6, 11-15).

Daniel 12:13 (ESV)

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 as Daniel was, he did not go to heaven when he died, but will receive his inheritance after he sleeps 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

“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, who gets up in a new body.

John 3:13 (ESV)

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

This verse could not be clearer. By the first century, no one had ascended into heaven.¹²

Acts 2:29-32 and 34 (ESV)

(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 should have said so. Instead, Peter said just the opposite, 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 Jesus was not.

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.

Job 19:25-27 (ESV)

(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!

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

Ezekiel 37:12-14 (ESV)

(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.”

Speaking of those Old Testament Jews who believed, these verses are loaded with truth. 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.

Matthew 22:23-32 (ESV)

(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 powerful section of Scripture is also recorded 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 dead people are dead until the resurrection, he said “in the resurrection” people will not marry.

Luke 14:14 (ESV)

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

If people went right to heaven or “hell” when they died, they would be repaid for their actions immediately after death. We are repaid after we rise from the dead, which is what Jesus taught.

John 11:21-26 (ESV)

(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.”

The Bible has many accounts of people being raised from the dead. At no time did Elisha, Jesus, Peter, or Paul, pray to God before raising the person to see if they would be willing to leave heaven and return to this fallen world where they would only have to die again someday. Furthermore, if the people who had died were in heaven, it certainly seems that they would have had something to say about what heaven was like when they returned. Even if they promised God they would not talk about heaven, it seems that someone would have asked them about it.

John 14:3 (ESV)

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 (ESV)

(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, the Apostles were teaching the resurrection from the dead. Other verses confirm that the Apostles taught the resurrection (Acts 17:18 and 32, 24:15).

1 Corinthians 15:42, 51 and 52 (ESV)

(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.

It is very important to note 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.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 (ESV)

(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.

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 (ESV)

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 and 5 (ESV)

(4) Then 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.

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 (ESV)

(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 Judgment Follows the Resurrection

If people died and went 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.

Matthew 10:15 (ESV)

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. The verses on the coming Day of Judgment are too many to print in this short article, but some clear ones that show that it is future include: Matt. 11:22 and 24, 12:36; 2 Pet. 2:9, 3:7; Jude 1:6.

Matthew 12:41 and 42 (ESV)

(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, get up *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 (ESV)

(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 this 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 (ESV)

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 (ESV)

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 (ESV)

(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.

Acts 17:31 (ESV)

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 (ESV)

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

2 Timothy 4:1 (ESV)

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.

Hebrews 6:1 and 2 (ESV)

(1) Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

(2) and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

Note in these verses how the foundational and elementary doctrines of the Christian faith do not include going to heaven or “hell” when we die, but rather the “resurrection” and the “eternal judgment” which follows it.

2 Peter 3:7 (ESV)

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.

Jude 1:6 (ESV)

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. Another verse saying some angels are awaiting the Judgment is 2 Peter 2:4. When the demons spoke to Jesus, they asked if he were 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. For one thing, it allows his demons to impersonate the dead and communicate untruths to mankind. For another, it makes the stark reality of death seem less of an enemy than it actually is. It also promotes ancestor worship, taking people’s attention off the true God. And 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.

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.

Notes:

1. Since science cannot examine “soul,” we do not know exactly what happens to the soul life of the egg and sperm in fertilization. Does one die and the other provide the life for the new individual, or do the soul life of the egg and sperm somehow blend? We do not know. We do know that the sin nature in mankind is passed on through the male side, which is how Jesus could be born of a woman yet be without the sin nature inherited by all the rest of Adam’s descendants.
2. In the Hebrew text, Genesis 1:20, 21, 24, and 30 clearly show that animals have a soul. The Hebrew word is *nephesh*, Strong’s number 5315. Many modern versions do not even use “soul” for the verses regarding mankind either. Studying this subject in the KJV helps somewhat, because it does use “soul” quite often, but a tool such as: *The Englishman’s Hebrew Concordance of the Old Testament*, (Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., Peabody, MA, reprinted 2006) [which is in English, not Hebrew] is most helpful.
3. We put “hell” in quotes because the concept of a place where people are eternally tortured is not biblical. For more information visit TruthOrTradition.com/hell and see Edward Fudge, *The Fire that Consumes* (Providential Press, Houston, TX, 1982).
4. God is the great source of spirit, and when a person gets saved, God gives us a part of His spirit. Acts 2:17 and 18 do not say, as per many versions that God will pour out “my Spirit.” The literal is like the KJV, that God will pour out “of my Spirit,” i.e. a part of His spirit (cp. 1 John 4:13). The measure of holy spirit that any Christian receives is the fullness of what God makes available in this Grace Administration. Thus, every Christian, while receiving a part of God’s great reservoir of spirit, still receives a full measure of holy spirit.
5. We say Rapture or Resurrection because Christians will be in the Rapture, while others will get up in one of the two resurrections.
6. One book that covers the state of the dead in more detail is our book, *Is There Death After Life?* Also there is some important material on the subject in another of our books, *The Christian’s Hope: The Anchor of the Soul*, pp. 127-135. Also, in this short article we do not mention all the different Judgments, such as the Sheep and Goat Judgment (Matt. 25:31-46), but have kept the subject to the Rapture and the two major resurrections that will occur in the future.
7. 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 died and rose from the dead.
8. We use the KJV 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.”
9. 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).
10. Scripture quotations marked (ESV) are taken from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version™ © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. All rights reserved.
11. For more on what “*Sheol*” is, see the Contender article in this issue of *The Sower* and go to TruthOrTradition.com/Sheol
12. 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. This point is made much clearer in versions such as the KJV: “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 KJV says. It seems likely that as the tradition developed that it was Jesus who had spoken these words, the last phrase was dropped 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. Most modern versions translate the verse in its shorter version, because that seems to make the most sense to them also. Bullinger has some good notes about this section in *The Companion Bible*.

**To send this article to a friend,
visit TruthOrTradition.com/dead**

Partner Profile

Jane Park Smith

Hello! I am so excited and privileged to share with you about how grateful I am for the Spirit & Truth Fellowship community of believers. This ministry has been a pivotal part of my walk, and very instrumental in helping me grow in my relationship with God and our awesome Savior Jesus Christ.

In brief, a Spirit & Truth Women's Retreat changed my life, and in some ways may have saved it. The wise counsel and loving honesty I experienced helped me relate to my Lord in deeper ways I never fathomed possible. Instead of relying on any other person or ordained clergy, I started to seek out, speak to, and literally hear God and Christ. I had been a part of a church that actually undermined my ability and talents to serve and glorify God, so it was a necessary intervention that set me free from great emotional and relational bondage.

From that point on, my resolve grew to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had set me free. The keys? Accountability, passion, and transparency. These are rare traits I find only in vibrant, healthy relationships and communities. Thus, I regard my partnership with this ministry as an incredible blessing because the believers I have met exemplify these traits with all humility. It is no wonder that God is bringing Spirit & Truth such increase and expansion of territory to reach others with the truth.

I find giving my finances and time to be an invaluable part of my personal growth and experiential knowledge of God. More than anything, I want to simply be with Him and know Him in all His fullness, to hang out with Him, and see things from His perspective. The moments I come into His presence make every moment of service more than worthwhile.

My pursuit of God has taken me on unexpected, sometimes blindingly painful, but always redemptive, roads. Even as an actress in faith-challenged Hollywood, I find that the Lord Jesus is faithful and ever so present. The paths are steeper, but his miracles are always greater. It was by following God that I was blessed with a God-fearing husband who supports and dreams with me. It was by taking heed to Christ's convictions in me that I followed a path of serving hungry orphans (www.eatsotheycan.org) and subsequently won my current Ms. America pageant title. It will be by cultivating the talents I have been gifted with that I will continue to support my charity work through my gainful employment as an actress and model. This blessing is a miracle by Hollywood's standards, but the kind of thing we should expect from our God.

My life is proof positive that God can be as near as your very breath, as knowable as any intimate friend, and as delightful as a crisp shaft of light through a forest canopy. I have utterly failed Him and myself many times, which is probably why I love Him so much and am so thankful for Christ. I had taken them for granted for so long that it took me a while to receive and fearlessly return God's love and grace. I pray God won't have to wait so long for you. All of me, all of you: He deserves no less.

With all my heart,
Jane Park Smith
Ms. America 2007-2008

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go to STFonline.org/partnership**

Freedom Behind Bars

by Grady B. Rogers

Philippians 2:1-5

- (1) If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,
- (2) then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.
- (3) Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.
- (4) Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.
- (5) Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

During my last three years working at Wendy's I began to build a very large real estate business, and was diversifying into other ventures also, so I left Wendy's in 1987 at the age of 27 to be self-employed. By then I had a wife and two beautiful little girls, a new home, and was a leader in my church. People in two Indiana cities wanted me to run for political offices ranging from city councilman to mayor. My attorney offered me a full ride scholarship to go to college and law school so I could work with his firm. My thriving business organization consisted of real estate rentals, management, and sales; a construction company; an investment group; a chain of convenience stores; a light fixture store; a hardware store/gift shop; a building supply store; a vacuum and sewing machine store; a bartering business; rights to a clothing distribution label; a water purification system patent and manufacturing facility; and much more. I had accumulated significant net worth in these endeavors, which had great potential for long lasting success.

I had been married for seven years, and did not believe that my wife, who I loved and with whom I had two daughters, was treating me in a godly way, which was very hurtful to me. In retrospect, I can see how I then took my eyes off Jesus Christ, feeling that I had done my best to be a godly husband, but he had not done his part. I was wrong. After many unsuccessful attempts to resolve our marital issues, I came to the point where I just didn't care any more, and, rather than seek godly counsel, turned to another woman.

In the book *Don't Blame God* (see page 3 of the enclosed price list), I learned that trials and temptations are a part of life, but that they do not come from God. Rather, He stands with us in them, and it is our choice as to whether tribulation makes or breaks us. My wrong choices destroyed my marriage, my spiritual life, my business, my reputation, and hurt a lot of people, including my wife and children. I willfully lived in sin for the next five years.

In 1992 my mother introduced me to the lady who later became my second wife. We began to build our family on God's principles and guidance. She had three children from her first marriage, and together we had two girls. I focused on buying and selling houses and businesses, and once again my entrepreneurial ventures began to thrive. This led to my next big test in life. To be continued...

SIDENOTE: I continue to have many opportunities to witness to men here in prison, and the Lord is making a big difference in many lives. Please pray for anyone you know who is in prison, that they will find true rehabilitation in a vital relationship with Jesus Christ. Many doors are opening for me, so please pray for me to be sensitive to the Lord's leading. I will keep you posted on future developments as we here continue to find *freedom behind bars*. [To correspond with Grady, send your letter to Spirit & Truth Fellowship and we will forward it to him so he can reply.]

The Story of Two Men

by John A. Lynn

In a nutshell, the whole Bible is the story of two men: the first Adam ruined everything; the “Last Adam” (Jesus Christ) is fixing it.

Romans 5:12 (NASB)¹

Therefore, just as through one man **sin** entered into the world, and **death** through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—

The problem we all face is twofold: sin, and its consequence, death. The only solution is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who by his free will choices lived a sinless life, then conquered death when God raised him from the dead, and who gives the gift of righteousness and everlasting life to all who make him Lord.

Romans 5:17

For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of **the gift of righteousness** reign in **life** through the one man, Jesus Christ.

Awesome! But how does one “receive God’s abundant provision of grace,” the “gift of righteousness” by which anyone who so chooses can go from death unto life? Read on.

Romans 10:9

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

If you have never made Jesus Christ your Lord, that is, decided to trust him as your Savior, you can do it right now and be born again of his spirit. Today can be the first day of the rest of your life in Christ.

Note:

1. Scripture quotations marked (NASB) are taken from the New American Standard Bible®, © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977 by The Lockman Foundation Used by permission.

**For further study please read our booklet, *Becoming a Christian: Why? What? How?*
at TruthOrTradition.com/salvation**

Fuel for the Fire

The Day Christ Comes Back to Get Us

by Ryan Maher

I made Jesus Christ my Lord and Savior when I was a sophomore in high school. My uncle, who shared the Word with me, gave me my first Bible, the New Believer's Bible New Testament (*New Living Translation*). I loved that Bible! It was so easy to read (partly because it was basically one step up from a paraphrased Bible) and it had helpful commentary.

As a new Christian, I was very excited because I was reading the Bible and understanding it well, and my enthusiasm was through the roof. I remember one occasion where I was invited to a college football game by another uncle and when he picked me up he noticed I had my new Bible. On any other day I would have thoroughly enjoyed watching the game, but instead (much to my uncle's annoyance) I read my Bible on and off during the entire game. I just couldn't get enough.

All was well with my new Bible until the day I read the commentary on 2 Corinthians 5:6-9 titled "When Does a Christian Enter Heaven?" It reads:

"Some people teach that when we die we go into a state of suspended animation. Then later we are called into the presence of God. But this passage clearly explains that when a believer dies, he or she will go directly to heaven to 'be at home with the Lord'..."¹

The moment you take your last breath on earth, you will take your first breath in heaven. So don't be afraid of death. Instead, enjoy your life in Christ on earth, and spend the rest of your time here introducing others to the one with whom you will spend eternity."²

I loved reading about heaven and the hope of one day living forever with God Himself, and I was very pleased to learn that upon my death, there wouldn't be a long waiting period; I would immediately be with God in heaven. Praise God!

But then I started thinking. If Christians are "aliens" in this world (1 Pet. 2:11), if the world is under the control of the Devil (1 John 5:19), if Christians are going to be persecuted (2 Tim. 3:12), and if we are awaiting God to "call us home"³ to be with Him at the moment we die, why not *run home*?

Suicide started to sound like a quick ticket home, as it seemed the sooner I got to be with God, the better. I never considered actually taking my own life, because I knew in my heart of hearts that death was not good. I had been to a few funerals, seen the tears, felt the pain, and knew there was nothing "good" about death. To my horror, I have since learned that more than a few sincere Christians have killed themselves because they thought they would go to heaven to be with God, Jesus, and their departed loved ones. Some have even killed others so they too could go. What that must do to God's heart is hard to imagine. Amidst my theological enigma, I went to the Bible and studied the topic of death and its aftermath. First, I found it says that death is an "enemy" (1 Cor. 15:26). How could it be an *enemy* if it took me "home" to be with God? Then I saw that John 3:13 says that "No man has ascended into heaven... (ESV)." And Acts 2:34 tells us that is even true of David, who was a man after God's own heart.

Among other Scriptures clearly stating that after death one is not conscious, I came across this rather shocking (at the time) verse:

Psalm 30:9

“What gain is there in my destruction, in my going down into the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it proclaim your faithfulness?”

I saw that, as per Genesis 3:19, man’s body is basically “dust,” and after death each man returns to dust. It is not at death that one goes to be with the Lord, but when the Lord comes back for us. The following verses tell us exactly that:

John 14:2 and 3

(2) In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.

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

When do we go to be with the Lord? When he comes back. Notice that he did not say “when you die, we will meet in Heaven.” No, the Lord Jesus Christ has promised to come back and **take us** to be with him where he is (see 1 Thess. 4:13-18).

As is shown elsewhere in this issue of *The Sower*, Scripture figuratively refers to death as “sleep.” Where there is no consciousness, there is no awareness of the passing of time. Thus, for each Christian who dies, that glorious day of Christ’s appearing will be his next waking moment. Hallelujah!

Notes:

1. For an in-depth explanation of 2 Corinthians 5:1-9, visit TruthOrTradition.com/difficult10

2. *New Believer’s Bible New Testament*, Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

3. This is a common belief in Christianity, one I used to hold many years ago. The Bible clearly says that “God is love” (1 John 4:8 and 16) and that the Devil is the one who holds the power of death (Heb. 2:14). For an article about whether or not God determines the time of someone’s death, see TruthOrTradition.com/timeofdeath

Dear Sower

40 years as a Christian

I just wanted you to know that I listened to audio teachings on your website this weekend and in my 40 years as a Christian, I have never heard anything that so speaks TRUTH as your teachings.

I know God led me to your website because I have often received the same teachings as I have read in my Bible. I want to thank you for courageously speaking this truth, even when some of it is not a popular belief trend!

You have done so much for me spiritually. I've learned more truth in 4 weeks here than I've learned in a lifetime elsewhere! I feel closer to God with my questions answered. I just know that He directed me to find you.

May God bless you in your efforts. Love in Christ,

Nancy Dismukes
Mount Olive, AL

Editor's Note:

Check out our Audio Teachings at TruthOrTradition.com/audio

Witness with MySpace

Dear friends in Christ! I just received my Sower magazine in the mail! I have to tell you that it is WONDERFUL, and a true BLESSING! Thank you ALL so much!

I appreciate everything you do and all your hard work! God bless each and every one of you!

Sheri (a MySpace friend)
Michigan

Editor's Note:

We now have over 11,000 MySpace friends. Come join in on the fun and witness online, MySpace.com/TruthOrTradition

Cremation Article Feedback

Thank you for this article [What does the Bible say about the cremation of a dead body? Is it right or wrong]. I have long been wanting information on cremation and proper burial because it is my desire to be cremated when I die.

Some Christians had told me that a body should not be burned only buried, but they never gave any Bible references. Thanks my friend,

Gracie,
Houston, TX

Editor's Note:

To read this article, go to TruthOrTradition.com/cremation

Don't Blame God Video

Great Video! I was born into a very loveless, evil, and violent family. But God was always with me. I always felt His loving spirit and He let me know I was not alone. I have always known Satan ran this world.

My mother was really into Satanism, which caused me to read the Bible. At an early age, I questioned people's interpretation of the Bible. Were we reading the same book? I have experienced the evil spiritual realm. I know it is real and I don't want any part of it. I choose God and Jesus. I have felt God's love in the middle of darkness, so I know it is real and true. Satan just selfishly wants to take as many people with him because he has no love.

Sincerely in Christ,
Georgia L.

Editor's Note:

This is a MySpace feedback we received on our Don't Blame God video posted on MySpace.com/TruthOrTradition

Slain in the Spirit Article

Thank you so much for your article on being slain in the spirit. I have grown up in a denomination that taught this and practiced it and I always was led to believe that I wasn't "very spiritual" because I never had a "slain in the spirit" experience!

It always made me second guess myself because I couldn't understand why it never happened to me and I love the Lord tremendously!

Your article has brought me so much freedom for an issue that has plagued me for so many years!

Rita

Editor's Note:

To read our research article on "Slain in the Spirit," visit TruthOrTradition.com/slain

Further Online Study Material

Listen to an audio teaching on "Death and Resurrection to Life" (Parts 1 & 2).

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

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What Does the Bible Say About Cremation?
What is Hell?**

Difficult scriptures explained

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