

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT THE OTHER SIDE OF DEATH

Harvest Inspiration Discoveries

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Table of Contents

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT THE OTHER SIDE OF DEATH	1
SCRIPTURE READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 15.....	3
1 - WHO IS THE POSSESSOR OF IMMORTALITY?	3
2 - IS MAN ENDOWED WITH AN ETERNALLY CONSCIOUS SOUL?	4
3 - WHAT TWO THINGS HAPPEN WHEN MAN DIES?	5
1. The body turns to dust again.....	5
2. The spirit (breath of life) returns to God.	5
4 - IS MAN CONSCIOUS IN DEATH?.....	6
1. In that very day his thoughts perish.	6
2. The dead know not anything.	6
3. Their feelings perish.	6
4. The dead praise not the Lord.	6
5. Death is like a sleep, Jesus said. Read John 11:11-14.	6
5 - WHAT IS THE GATEWAY TO ETERNAL LIFE?	7
6 - CAN THE DEAD COMMUNICATE WITH THE LIVING?.....	7
1. The dead know nothing about their own children.	7
2. The dead have no part in any earthly affairs whatever.	7
3. God condemns attempts to communicate with the dead.	8
7 - WHAT IS OUR ONLY HOPE?	8
THE OTHER SIDE OF DEATH SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL—	8
BRIEF BIBLE STUDY-The Other Side of Death.....	9
1 - WHO IS THE POSSESSOR OF IMMORTALITY?	9
2 - IS MAN ENDOWED WITH AN ETERNALLY CONSCIOUS SOUL?	9
3 - WHAT TWO THINGS HAPPEN WHEN MAN DIES?.....	10
1. The body turns to dust again.	10
2. The spirit (breath of life) returns to God.	10
4 - IS MAN CONSCIOUS IN DEATH?	10
1. In that very day his thoughts perish.....	10
2. The dead know not anything.	10
3. Their feelings perish.	10

4. The dead praise not the Lord.	10
5. Death is like a sleep, Jesus said. Read John 11:11-14.	10
5 - WHAT IS THE GATEWAY TO ETERNAL LIFE?	11
6 - CAN THE DEAD COMMUNICATE WITH THE LIVING?.....	11
1. The dead know nothing about their own children.	11
2. The dead have no part in any earthly affairs whatever.	11
WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT ETERNAL LIFE IN CHRIST.....	11
SCRIPTURE READING: REVELATION 20:14-15; 21; MALACHI 4:1, 3	11
1 - WHAT IS THE BIBLE MEANING OF THE WORD, “HELL”?.....	11
1. Hell sometimes means the “grave.”	12
2. Hell also signifies a “place of burning.”	12
3. Hell sometimes represents darkness.....	12
4. “hell,” is found in 2 Peter 2:4.	12
2 - WHERE DO ALL MEN GO AT DEATH?.....	12
1. The dead go into the house of death, appointed to all living.	12
2. This house is the grave (<i>sheol</i>).	12
3. This grave is <i>hades</i> in the Greek New Testament.....	13
4. <i>Hades</i> is translated “hell” in Acts 2:27, 31, meaning the “grave.”	13
5. The spirit (breath of life) of all men goes to God at death.....	13
3 - WHEN WILL THE DEAD COME OUT OF THE GRAVE?.....	13
4 - WHERE WILL THE WICKED AND HELL (THE GRAVE) BE CAST?	14
5 - WILL THE WHOLE MAN BE CAST INTO THIS FIRE?	14
6 - HOW LONG WILL THE WICKED BURN?.....	14
1. Until body and soul are destroyed.	14
2. Until neither root nor branch is left.	14
3. Until they are devoured—the “second death.”	14
7 - WHAT IS THE MEANING OF “EVERLASTING” FIRE?.....	15
8 - WHEN AND WHERE WILL THE WICKED BURN IN HELL?.....	16
9 - HOW CAN WE ESCAPE DESTRUCTION AND HAVE ETERNAL LIFE?	16
Brief Review Questions —	17
ETERNAL LIFE IN CHRIST SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL—	17
BRIEF BIBLE STUDY-Eternal Life in Christ	18
1 - WHERE DO ALL MEN GO AT DEATH?.....	18
A. The dead go into the house of death, appointed to all living.....	18
B. This house is the grave (<i>sheol</i>).	18
C. This grave is <i>hades</i> in the Greek New Testament.	18
D. <i>Hades</i> is translated “hell” in Acts 2:27, 31, meaning the “grave.”	18

E. The spirit (breath of life) of all men goes to God at death.....	18
2 - WHERE WILL THE WICKED AND HELL (THE GRAVE) BE CAST?	18
3 - WILL THE WHOLE MAN BE CAST INTO THIS FIRE?	18
4 - HOW LONG WILL THE WICKED BURN?	18
A. Until body and soul are destroyed.	18
B. Until neither root nor branch is left.	19
C. Until they are devoured—the “second death.”	19
5 - WHAT IS THE MEANING OF “EVERLASTING” FIRE?.....	19
6 - WHEN AND WHERE WILL THE WICKED BURN IN HELL?.....	19
7 - HOW CAN WE ESCAPE DESTRUCTION AND HAVE ETERNAL LIFE?	19

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 15

If we properly approach the Bible, we will see that all its great doctrines run parallel to one another, and that there is no contradiction or confusion. This is accomplished by studying all Bible teaching on a given subject and then comparing subject with subject. Paul calls it “comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (*1 Corinthians 2:13*). We will do just that in this most important lesson. Remember, it was Christ who in the beginning created all things (*Ephesians 3:9*), and man is therefore dependent upon Christ for life (*1 John 5:12*). When man sinned he forfeited his right to life, “for the wages of sin is death” (*Romans 6:23*). And it is “our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (*2 Timothy 1:10*). Thus, there is hope of everlasting life only in Christ (*John 3:16*).

1 - WHO IS THE POSSESSOR OF IMMORTALITY?

The word, “immortal,” occurs only once in the Bible, and refers to God.

1 Timothy 1:17—“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever.”

The word, “immortality,” is used only five times in the Bible. You will find it in 1 Timothy 6:15-16; Romans 2:7; 2 Timothy 1:10; and 1 Corinthians 15:51-54.

The saints of God receive immortality at the hour of resurrection, from the great Fountainhead of life, the divine Source of immortality. Said Paul:

1 Corinthians 15:22-23—“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming.”

1 Corinthians 15:52-55—“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”

As you think back over your life and recall with what frequency the word, “immortality,” has been used in funeral sermons and in religious conversation, is it not surprising to discover that this word is found

but five times in the Bible. It never refers to man or any part of man's nature; but the clear, emphatic declaration is made that God "only hath immortality." We do not have it naturally or inherently. We are to seek for it, discover it in the gospel, and receive it as a reality at the second coming of Christ. It is only through Christ that any sinner has hope of immortality.

From the foregoing it is clear, then, that man is dependent utterly upon the Life-giver for an endless life, even as in the beginning he was dependent upon the Life-giver for life. Man is mortal, and "mortal" means "subject to death." Only God is immortal (*1 Timothy 1:17; 1 Timothy 6:15-16*); that is, "not subject to death."

Eternal life and immortality are not for those who neglect or reject Christ. Immortality is the crowning gift of the gospel, and is reserved only for sincere ones, who, as Paul said, "by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life" (*Romans 2:7*).

2 - IS MAN ENDOWED WITH AN ETERNALLY CONSCIOUS SOUL?

In the beginning God made Adam, the first man, from the dust of the ground and gave him the breath of life. Then he became a living soul.

Genesis 2:7—"The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (*Job 33:4*).

The substantial part of man's body is composed of dust, as the Bible says. The simple statement is made that God breathed into his nostrils the "breath of life." Job said:

Job 27:3—"All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God ["breath which God gave," margin] is in my nostrils."

Then man became "a living soul." Note carefully that God did not breathe into man a living soul or endow him with a living soul, but He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. An electric light bulb, of itself, gives no light. But when an electric current is sent through its wiring, light is produced. Thus Adam's body, perfect as it was, could not perform any function or fulfill any purpose. So God switched on the current of life, and Adam then became a living, active, functioning soul. The living soul did not exist before Adam was made. And it was not breathed into Adam, but came as a result of the union of his body and the breath of life, or "the breath of the spirit of life," as it is called in one place, which we shall note in a moment.

Now, did the first man become an immortal or a mortal soul when his life began? The Hebrew and Greek words from which we translate our English words, "soul" and "spirit," are found some 1,700 times in the Bible. The word "soul," as used in the Bible, does not always have exactly the same meaning. The same holds true for the word, "spirit." We should therefore avoid being dogmatic on any one definition.

Not one of the 1,700 appearances of these original words for "soul" and "Spirit" are said to be immortal, never dying, imperishable, indestructible, everlasting, eternal, or in possession of immortality.

Nor are the dead ever represented as being capable of a conscious existence apart from the body. Even the animals became living souls when the breath of life entered their bodies at creation. In *Genesis 1:30*, we

read: “To every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life.” The marginal rendering of “life” is “a living soul.” In Revelation 16:3, the animals of the sea are called living souls. The original expression for “living soul” is *nephesh chayah*. This expression is used in Gen-esis 1:20-21, 24, in referring to the animals as “the moving creature that hath life,” “every living creature,” and “the living creature.” Thus animals are called “living souls,” or *nephesh chayah*. This is the identical expression used in *Genesis* 2:7, when man became a ‘living soul,’ or *nephesh chayah*. At death, this breath leaves man. These words from Genesis, describing the destruction at the Flood, are illus-trative:

Genesis 7:21-22—“All flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: all in whose nostrils was the breath of life.”

The marginal reading of Genesis 7:22 is “The breath of the spirit of life.”

The question arises: Is man then a mere animal? No, indeed! Such a conclusion is entirely unwarranted. In your garden is a green-leafed bud bearing beautiful, blushing roses. Close by is an ugly weed. They are both of the vegetable kingdom, receive the same kind of sunshine and rain, and grow in identical soil. But no one calls a rose a weed or a weed a rose. The difference does not lie in the sunshine, soil, or rain, but in the plant organism. When God put life into Adam’s organism He produced different results than when He put life into animal organ-isms.

As we have already suggested, an electric current passes into a light-bulb filament, and we get light. It passes into the heavy coils of an electric heater, and heat is the chief product. The current is connected with an electric meter, and a revolving motion is the result. We get power. Whether we get light, heat, or power depends on what the current goes into. But it is the same current.

So when God breathed life into Adam, He was putting that life into the masterpiece of earthly creation. Said the psalmist, “I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (*Psalms* 139:14). Man was made only a “little lower than the angels” (*Psalms* 8:5). As poetically expressed by one writer, “What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason, how infinite in faculty! in form and movement, how expressive and admirable in ac-tion, how like an angel in apprehension, how like a god!”

3 - WHAT TWO THINGS HAPPEN WHEN MAN DIES?

1. The body turns to dust again.

Genesis 3:19—“Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou re-turn” (*Ecclesiastes* 3:20).

2. The spirit (breath of life) returns to God.

Ecclesiastes 12:7—“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.”

All living creatures die the same way as man. Said the wise man:

Ecclesiastes 3:19—“That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast” (*Psalms* 104:26-29).

When man was created, his body was first formed of dust. Then God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living, thinking, feeling, active being. God called him a living soul. He did

not exist before.

When man dies, the simple opposite of the creative process takes place. Says the Bible, “His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish” (*Psalms 146:4*). The breath of the spirit of life of all men, good and bad, returns to God. God also takes back the breath of life from animals, as you have read. Solomon rejects the theory that man’s spirit goes upward and a beast’s spirit downward (*Ecclesiastes 3:19-21*).

4 - IS MAN CONSCIOUS IN DEATH?

The Scripture is very clear on this question. Notice five points:

1. In that very day his thoughts perish.

Psalms 146:4—“His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.”

2. The dead know not anything.

Ecclesiastes 9:5—“The dead know not any thing.”

3. Their feelings perish.

Ecclesiastes 9:6—“Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished.”

4. The dead praise not the Lord.

Psalms 115:17—“The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.”

5. Death is like a sleep, Jesus said. Read John 11:11-14.

Yes, the Scriptures are plain. When death comes, all thinking and feeling end. If they do not, the Bible is false and unreliable. Thinking and feeling did not exist before God breathed life into man, and they stop entirely when the man dies. When the electric current is turned off, the bulb is there, but light is gone. Thinking and feeling come as a result of the operation of the current of life in conjunction with the body and brain of man. When the body gets too much out of order or the current of life is turned off, or both, all thinking and feeling cease.

Who started the theory of the natural immortality of man, his soul, etc.? The Egyptians believed in the immortality of the soul, and passed the doctrine onto the Greeks and Romans, who in turn gave it to Christian churches. However, this belief in natural immortality did not originate with the Egyptians, but with the devil himself. God said, “Thou shalt surely die” (*Genesis 2:17*). The devil said, “Ye shall not surely die” (*Genesis 3:4*). The devil deceived Eve and nearly the entire world. Count-less millions live in fear, dread, superstition, and under religious tyranny because of the devil’s lie and the multiplied horrible theories that have been built upon this original falsehood.

After man sinned, God removed him from the tree of life, lest he live forever (*Genesis 3:22-23*). God did not propose to have everlasting sinners.

In death there is no consciousness of the passing of time. When David is resurrected, it will seem but the next instant after he died—“the twinkling of an eye,” as it were. In the Bible, death is called “sleep” fifty-four times.

5 - WHAT IS THE GATEWAY TO ETERNAL LIFE?

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17—“The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (2 Timothy 4:8; Acts 2:29-34).

According to the Scriptures, all the righteous go to heaven at one time. The voice of Jesus, at His second coming, will open the tomb of every saint, and with the righteous living they will be rewarded together. For the sleeping saints, then, the resurrection is the gateway to eternal life.

But if, as some believe, death ushers one immediately into heaven or hell, why is there to be a resurrection? If, through the ages, the good have gone to heaven at death and the bad to hell, of what value would the resurrection be? If a man is already in hell, why liberate him and then thrust him back? There is no reason for the resurrection if people are rewarded at death.

Christ said He would receive His disciples unto Himself at His second coming (*John 14:1-3*). If they and all other good people who have died are already with Christ in heaven, then His teaching about His second coming becomes a farce. Are the saints coming from heaven back to their graves to rise and go to heaven again?

All the righteous will be rewarded at once. The living will not prevent (precede) the righteous dead (*1 Thessalonians 4:15-17*), and the righteous dead will not be rewarded before the righteous living (*Hebrews 11:13, 39-40*).

There are two resurrections: one at the beginning, the other at the close, of the millennium—the first, “the resurrection of life”; the second, “the resurrection of damnation” (*John 5:29*). We must decide in this life in which of these two resurrections we shall have a part. And our decision must be made before death.

2 Corinthians 6:2—“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

It is too late after death to decide. “They that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth” (*Isaiah 38:18*). The punishment of the wicked will be discussed in our next lesson. God created man with the intention that he should live forever. However, immortality was the possession he could have only after being tested. Man failed in the test. He accepted the words of Satan in preference to the words of God, and was led thereby into disobedience. Eve believed that she would not die, but rather would enter upon a higher plane of experience and become as the gods. How many millions have since been misled as she was, believing that death is not real at all, but just the gateway of release into a higher realm!

6 - CAN THE DEAD COMMUNICATE WITH THE LIVING?

Here are three Bible facts that are so important as to be a matter of life and death!

1. The dead know nothing about their own children.

Job 14:21—“His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.”

2. The dead have no part in any earthly affairs whatever.

Ecclesiastes 9:6—“Neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.”

3. God condemns attempts to communicate with the dead.

Read Deuteronomy 18:9-12 carefully and prayerfully.

The Bible says No to the question before us. Attempts to communicate with the dead are considered by God as delving into “abomination!” According to Bible prophecy, spiritism is to have a great revival in these last days, but it is not of God (*1 Timothy 4:1*).

7 - WHAT IS OUR ONLY HOPE?

Our only hope is in the resurrection and the coming of our Lord, for if the dead rise not, all who have died in Christ are perished. This is the studied conclusion of Paul:

1 Corinthians 15:16- 19—“For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”

If it were God’s plan to renew the life of the sleeping saints in any other way except the resurrection, Paul would not say that “then they . . . which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.” But Paul knew that the resurrection was the only gateway into eternity for all who had fallen under the cruel hand of death—so he concluded that the saints would either come forth in the resurrection or perish!

And so, dear friend, the resurrection at the return of Jesus is our only hope. And it is Christ who makes the resurrection to eternal life possible. He possesses immortality. Christ is the fountain of eternal life. If we are to live with those who have died victoriously, we must anchor our faith in Him—yes, in Him. There is no other way to heaven.

The next lesson is really part of this one: “Eternal Life in Christ.” It is a topic you will want to carefully study.

Brief Review Questions —

Does anyone besides God automatically have immortality?

What happens when a man dies?

Is man conscious in death?

THE OTHER SIDE OF DEATH SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL—

“In the midst of Eden grew the tree of life, whose fruit had the power of perpetuating life. Had Adam remained obedient to God, he would have continued to enjoy free access to this tree and would have lived forever. But when he sinned he was cut off from partaking of the tree of life, and he became subject to death. The divine sentence, ‘Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,’ points to the utter extinction of life.

“Immortality, promised to man on condition of obedience, had been forfeited by transgression. Adam could not transmit to his posterity that which he did not possess; and there could have been no hope for the

fallen race had not God, by the sacrifice of His Son, brought immortality within their reach. While ‘death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,’ Christ ‘hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel’ (Romans 5:12; 2 Timothy 1:10). And only through Christ can immortality be obtained. Said Jesus: ‘He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life’ (John 3:36). Every man may come into possession of this priceless blessing if he will comply with the conditions. All ‘who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality,’ will receive ‘eternal life’ (Romans 2:7).

“The only one who promised Adam life in disobedience was the great deceiver. And the declaration of the serpent to Eve in Eden—‘Ye shall not surely die’—was the first sermon ever preached upon the immortality of the soul. Yet this declaration, resting solely upon the authority of Satan, is echoed from the pulpits of Christendom and is received by the majority of mankind as readily as it was received by our first parents. The divine sentence, ‘The soul that sinneth, it shall die’ (Ezekiel 18:20), is made to mean: The soul that sinneth, it shall not die, but live eternally. We cannot but wonder at the strange infatuation which renders men so credulous concerning the words of Satan and so unbelieving in regard to the words of God.

“Had man after his fall been allowed free access to the tree of life, he would have lived forever, and thus sin would have been immortalized. But cherubim and a flaming sword kept ‘the way of the tree of life’ (Genesis 3:24), and not one of the family of Adam has been permitted to pass that barrier and partake of the life-giving fruit. Therefore there is not an immortal sinner.

“But after the Fall, Satan bade his angels make a special effort to inculcate the belief in man’s natural immortality; and having induced the people to receive this error, they were to lead them on to conclude that the sinner would live in eternal misery . . . Thus the archfiend clothes with his own attributes the Creator and Benefactor of mankind . . . Satan is seeking to overcome men today . . . by shaking their confidence in their Creator and leading them to doubt the wisdom of His government and the justice of His laws.” —*Great Controversy*, 532-534

BRIEF BIBLE STUDY-THE OTHER SIDE OF DEATH

1 - WHO IS THE POSSESSOR OF IMMORTALITY?

1 Timothy 1:17—“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever.”

1 Corinthians 15:22-23—“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made _____. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming.”

1 Corinthians 15:52-55—“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall _____, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in _____. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”

2 - IS MAN ENDOWED WITH AN ETERNALLY CONSCIOUS SOUL?

Genesis 2:7—“The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a _____” (*Job 33:4*).

Job 27:3—“All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God [“breath which God gave,” margin] is in my nostrils.”

Genesis 7:21-22—“All flesh died that moved _____ the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: all in whose nostrils was the _____ of life.”

3 - WHAT TWO THINGS HAPPEN WHEN MAN DIES?

1. The body turns to dust again.

Genesis 3:19—“Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return”

(*Ecclesiastes 3:20*).

2. The spirit (breath of life) returns to God.

Ecclesiastes 12:7—“Then shall the _____ return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.”

Ecclesiastes 3:19—“That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even _____ befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast” (*Ps. 104:26-29*).

4 - IS MAN CONSCIOUS IN DEATH?

1. In that very day his thoughts perish.

Psalms 146:4—“His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his _____ perish.”

2. The dead know not anything.

Ecclesiastes 9:5—“The dead know not _____.”

3. Their feelings perish.

Ecclesiastes 9:6—“Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now _____.”

4. The dead praise not the Lord.

Psalms 115:17—“The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into _____.”

5. Death is like a sleep, Jesus said. Read John 11:11-14.

5 - WHAT IS THE GATEWAY TO ETERNAL LIFE?

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17—“The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up to-gether _____ them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (2 Timothy 4:8; Acts 2:29-34).

2 Corinthians 6:2—“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (1 Corinthians 15:16-19).

6 - CAN THE DEAD COMMUNICATE WITH THE LIVING?

1. The dead know nothing about their own children.

Job 14:21—“His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it _____; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.”

2. The dead have no part in any earthly affairs whatever.

Ecclesiastes 9:6—“Neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.”

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT ETERNAL LIFE IN CHRIST

SCRIPTURE READING: REVELATION 20:14-15; 21; MALACHI 4:1, 3

The doctrine of an eternally burning hell in which lost sinners suffer endlessly in the awful pain of “hellfire” is still held by millions of serious-minded Christians. This belief is an outgrowth of the “natural immortality” idea. That is, if the sinner, as well as the saint, were immortal, neither would ever really die, but would live on forever in a place of ghastly torment or of unrivaled bliss.

In the light of our last lesson, you yourself must decide whether this doctrine is Scriptural. Using sanctified reason, you must decide, too, whether a just God would permit the wicked to suffer throughout eternity for the sins they committed in a few brief years. One writer has said:

“If eternal hell is real, love is eternally frustrated and heaven is a place of mourning and concern for the lost. Such joy and such grief cannot go together. There can be no split personality for the real lovers of God and surely not for God Himself. God cannot be faithless to Himself no matter how faithless we are” (*A Reader’s Notebook by Gerald Kennedy. Copyright 1953, Harper & Brothers*).

However, the fact that a just God will not punish sinners throughout eternity in hellfire does not remove the prospect that a just God will punish sinners with fire and destroy them. “The wages of sin is death,” said Paul. Fire is the best means of destruction. And death is destruction—simply the cessation of life. This is the reward of the wicked. So the Bible teaches, as we shall now see.

1 - WHAT IS THE BIBLE MEANING OF THE WORD, “HELL”?

There are three meanings. Let us look at them, one at a time:

1. Hell sometimes means the “grave.”

The Hebrew word widely used for “grave” is *sheol*. In Psalm 16:10, we have it rendered “hell,” referring to the grave. “Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.” In Acts 2:27, this Scripture is quoted by Peter. In this verse, the Greek word for “hell” is *hades*. Its meaning is “grave,” the same as *sheol* in the Hebrew. As you know, the New Testament was originally written in Greek. In Acts 2:31, Peter definitely says that Psalm 16:10, the verse we speak of, refers to Christ’s

resurrection. Christ was not left in “hell,” that is, not in the grave, but was raised from the dead. The word, *hades*, is used eleven times in the New Testament. In 1 Corinthians 15:55, it is translated “grave.” Other-wise it is translated “hell,” signifying the grave or “state in the grave.”

2. Hell also signifies a “place of burning.”

In the New Testament the word is *Gehenna*, or the “Valley of Hinnom,” described as “a deep, narrow glen, south of Jerusalem, where, after the introduction of the fire gods of Ahaz, the idolatrous Jews offered their children to Moloch.” In this Valley of Hinnom, the bodies of dead animals and the refuse of the city were cast. Fires burned continuously, and worms infested the carcasses of animals. What the fire did not destroy, the worms consumed. It thus was a type of complete annihilation. *Gehenna*, the place of burning, is used twelve times, being translated “hell.”

3. Hell sometimes represents darkness

4. “hell,” is found in 2 Peter 2:4.

“God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.” The Greek word here is *Tartarus*, not *Gehenna* or *hades*. In this text, hell represents the darkness that enshrouded Satan and his angels, when they were separated from God, and heaven and the darkness that has come to earth because of the presence of the prince of darkness (*Isaiah 60:2*).

2 - WHERE DO ALL MEN GO AT DEATH?

Surprisingly, the Scriptures declare that all men go to hell (or the grave) when they die. Here are five facts about death:

1. The dead go into the house of death, appointed to all living.

Job 30:23—“For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.”

2. This house is the grave (*sheol*).

Job 17:13—“If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness.”

3. This grave is *hades* in the Greek New Testament.

1 Corinthians 15:55—“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (*See margin.*)

4. *Hades* is translated “hell” in Acts 2:27, 31, meaning the “grave.”

Acts 2:27, 31—“Because Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” “He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption.”

- a. *Hades* is translated as “hell” ten times in the New Testament.

5. The spirit (breath of life) of all men goes to God at death.

Ecclesiastes 12:7—“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.”

Hell, or the grave, is an impartial place. “There is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked” (*Ecclesiastes 9:2*). “What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave [*sheol*]” (*Psalms 89:48*)? The rich and poor, the high and low, the righteous and the wicked—all meet in that abode. Into the grave have gone the vilest characters that have ever lived, and its portals have opened to receive the loveliest and sweetest mortals whose gentle foot-steps ever graced the earth.

Yes, death is an “enemy” (*1 Corinthians 15:26*) and the grave is not a comforting consolation, but we thank God that “blessed are the dead which die in the Lord” (*Revelation 14:13*). They have the hope of the resurrection. And we may also rejoice that the wicked are now slumbering in silence rather than screaming in torture and agony.

3 - WHEN WILL THE DEAD COME OUT OF THE GRAVE?

The righteous come out of the grave, or *hades*, at the sound of the “last trump” (*1 Corinthians 15:51-52, 55*). This trump sounds at Christ’s second coming (*1 Thessalonians 4:16*). And this is at the beginning of the millennium (*Revelation 20:6*). Christ’s promise of His glorious return, to gather His chosen ones unto Himself (*John 14:1-3*), will some-day be fulfilled. At the sound of the “trump of God,” the saints who have slept in silence, unconscious of the passing of time, will suddenly be awakened. Some have slumbered for thousands of years; others have had only a brief period in the grave. To all, the time will seem the same—as just a moment. They will come forth with their faces glowing with joy, health, and immortality.

The living righteous will be caught up with these resurrected saints, and they will go to be with Christ and reign with Him a thousand years. What a glad and glorious reunion this will be.

But when will the wicked dead come out of the grave? They will be raised from their graves a thousand years later (*Revelation 20:5*). “But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.” This is the Bible teaching.

Hell (*hades*, or the grave) gives up its dead (*Revelation 20:13*). This occurs at the end of the millennium, when the saints and the New Jerusalem descend from heaven to earth. The untold millions of the wicked dead are raised from the grave, or *hades*. Satan goes out to deceive them. He then leads them in assault against the city of God, the home of the saints (*Revelation 20:5-9*). Notice carefully what happens next.

4 - WHERE WILL THE WICKED AND HELL (THE GRAVE) BE CAST?

They will be cast into the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:14-15—“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

Yes, they will be cast into a literal lake of fire. Nine times does Jesus give warning concerning this “hell” of fire.

This is the “place of burning,” the final *Gehenna* of Scripture. This *Gehenna* is mentioned twelve times in the New Testament.

5 - WILL THE WHOLE MAN BE CAST INTO THIS FIRE?

The answer is clear: all of him—“both soul and body in hell” (*Gehenna*).

Matthew 10:28—“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (*Matthew 5:30; 18:8-9*).

Since there is no fire in the grave, this consignment to a place of burn-ing could not take place at death. The burning hell Jesus is speaking of is not one into which some ghostlike spirit or soul is cast, but one into which men are cast bodily. Since at death the body goes into the grave, where there is no burning, this hell that Jesus here speaks of has no connection with ordinary death. It refers to the second and final death by fire, when the wicked are destroyed at the close of the millennium.

6 - HOW LONG WILL THE WICKED BURN?

1. Until body and soul are destroyed.

Matthew 10:28—“But rather fear him which is able to de-stroy both soul and body in hell.”

2. Until neither root nor branch is left.

Malachi 4:1—“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.”

3. Until they are devoured—the “second death.”

Revelation 20:9, 14—“And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them . . . And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.”

The wicked will burn forever, as long as life lasts.

Revelation 20:10—“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

If you will read Exodus 21:6, you will find that “for ever” may mean only as long as a man lives. Jonah

said that he was shut up in the great fish and “the earth with her bars was about me for ever” (*Jonah 2:6*). Yet he was in this strange abode only three short days.

It is perfectly plain that the wicked are going to be completely destroyed. This will be the second death. At the first death, the wicked went into the grave. The second death marks the end of the sinner, the end of death, and the end of the grave. God is forever through with sin, sinners, death, and the grave. Those who suffer the second death will be destroyed by eternal fire. Jesus declared, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment” (*Matthew 25:46*). Notice it does not say “pun-ishing,” but “punishment” and has reference to the result rather than to the method.

7 - WHAT IS THE MEANING OF “EVERLASTING” FIRE?

Everlasting, or eternal, fire is fire that God uses to destroy everlastingly the enemies of His truth.

Matthew 25:41—“Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

Sodom and Gomorrah are given in the Scriptures as an example of this fire.

“Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (*Jude 7*).

Don’t forget that these cities were burned to ashes.

2 Peter 2:6—“And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly.”

This is the kind of “everlasting punishment” the wicked receive.

Matthew 25:46 —“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

This fire is also called “unquenchable fire.”

Mark 9:43-44—“And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”

Jerusalem was destroyed by such a fire.

Jeremiah 17:27—“But if ye will not hearken unto Me to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched” (*Jeremiah 52:12-13*).

This fire is called unquenchable. This word simply indicates that no power will quench the fire until it has consumed everything, just as you have read in your lesson. Jerusalem is not burning today. Yet God said it would be destroyed by a fire, “and it shall not be quenched.” It was not quenched, but burned everything up and burned out. So shall the wicked be destroyed.

The “worm” is a symbol of complete and final destruction. In the Valley of Hinnom, the worms

consumed what the fire did not destroy.

8 - WHEN AND WHERE WILL THE WICKED BURN IN HELL?

Peter tells us the wicked are reserved to the day of judgment to be punished.

2 Peter 2:9—“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (*Proverbs 11:31*).

The earth will become, temporarily, a fiery hell.

2 Peter 3:7 —“But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”

Keep in mind that this happens at the end of the millennium, after the wicked dead are raised.

Revelation 20:5—“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.”

Revelation 20:9—“Fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.”

So complete will be the destruction, that the wicked will be as though they had not been.

Obadiah 16—“For as ye have drunk upon My holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been.”

Psalms 37:10—“For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.”

Then God will make a glorious new earth.

2 Peter 3:13—“Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

9 - HOW CAN WE ESCAPE DESTRUCTION AND HAVE ETERNAL LIFE?

Let us fully accept Christ and be diligent to be without spot of sin.

2 Peter 3:14—“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”

God will write our names in His book. And no one whose name is retained there after the judgment will be destroyed by fire (*Revelation 21:8; 22:15*).

Revelation 20:15—“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

God never intended that any man should ever suffer in hell. It is “pre-pared for the devil and his angels” (*Matthew 25:41*). God wishes us to have a home with Him forever and ever. Christ died that we might inherit a home with Him. It is by His mercies that we receive this rich reward. His second coming will soon open the literal gates of heaven to receive the redeemed. Is it not all wonderful? Let us praise God for the glorious plan of salvation!

The next lesson deals with a topic of special importance in our daily lives: “The Bible and Better Health.” This is subject you will want to carefully study. All of us want better health.

Brief Review Questions —

- Where do all men go at death?
- When will the dead come out of the grave?
- Where will the incorrigibly wicked finally be cast?
- How long do the wicked suffer in hellfire, before they no longer exist?
- How can we escape destruction and live forever with Christ?

ETERNAL LIFE IN CHRIST SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL—

“ ‘The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord’ (Romans 6:23). While life is the inheritance of the righteous, death is the portion of the wicked. Moses declared to Israel: ‘I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil’ (Deuteronomy 30:15). The death referred to in these Scriptures is not that pronounced upon Adam, for all mankind suffer the penalty of his transgression. It is ‘the second death’ that is placed in contrast with everlasting life.

“In consequence of Adam’s sin, death passed upon the whole human race. All alike go down into the grave. And through the provisions of the plan of salvation, all are to be brought forth from their graves. ‘There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust’; ‘for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive’ (Acts 24:15; 1 Corinthians 15:22). But a distinction is made between the two classes that are brought forth. ‘All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation’ (John 5:28, 29). They who have been ‘accounted worthy’ of the resurrection of life are ‘blessed and holy.’ ‘On such the second death hath no power’ Revelation 20:6). But those who have not, through repentance and faith, secured pardon, must receive the penalty of transgression—‘the wages of sin.’ They suffer punishment varying in duration and intensity, ‘accord-ing to their works,’ but finally ending in the second death. Since it is impossible for God, consistently with His justice and mercy, to save the sinner in his sins, He deprives him of the existence which his transgres-sions have forfeited and of which he has proved himself unworthy. Says an inspired writer: ‘Yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.’ And another declares: ‘They shall be as though they had not been’ (Psalm 37:10; Obadiah 16). Covered with infamy, they sink into hopeless, eternal oblivion.

“Thus will be made an end of sin, with all the woe and ruin which have resulted from it. Says the psalmist: ‘Thou hast destroyed the wicked, Thou hast put out their name forever and ever. O thou enemy, destruc-tions are come to a perpetual end’ (Psalm 9:5, 6). John, in the Revela-tion, looking forward to the eternal state, hears a universal anthem of praise undisturbed by one note of discord. Every creature in heaven and earth was heard ascribing glory to God (Revelation 5:13). There will then be no lost souls to blaspheme God as they writhe in never-ending torment; no wretched beings in hell will mingle their shrieks with the songs of the saved.

“Upon the fundamental error of natural immortality rests the doc-trine of consciousness in death—a doctrine, like eternal torment, op-posed to the teachings of the Scriptures, to the dictates of reason, and to our feelings of humanity.” —*Great Controversy*, 544-545

BRIEF BIBLE STUDY-ETERNAL LIFE IN CHRIST

1 - WHERE DO ALL MEN GO AT DEATH?

A. The dead go into the house of death, appointed to all living.

Job 30:23—"For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for _____ living."

B. This house is the grave (*sheol*).

Job 17:13—"If I wait, the _____ is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness."

C. This grave is *hades* in the Greek New Testament.

1 Corinthians 15:55—"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (*See margin.*)

D. *Hades* is translated "hell" in Acts 2:27, 31, meaning the "grave."

Acts 2:27, 31—"Because Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." "He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption."

E. The spirit (breath of life) of all men goes to God at death.

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Jeremiah 17:27—“But if ye will not hearken unto Me to _____ the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched” (*Jeremiah 52:12-13*).

6 - WHEN AND WHERE WILL THE WICKED BURN IN HELL?

2 Peter 2:9 (*Proverbs 11:31*); **2 Peter 3:7**; **Revelation 20:5**; **Revelation 20:9**; **Obadiah 16**; **Psalms 37:10**; **2 Peter 3:13**.

7 - HOW CAN WE ESCAPE DESTRUCTION AND HAVE ETERNAL LIFE?

2 Peter 3:14; **Revelation 20:15**.

