

THE BIBLICAL TRUTH ABOUT HEAVEN AND HELL

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Basically, the Christian world believes that each person has an immortal soul which separates from the body at death and goes to be with God in Heaven or to Hell to be tormented forever. Here are the Biblical facts disproving this doctrine and exposing where it comes from.

IMMORTAL SOUL

The words "immortal soul" cannot be found in the Bible. God only has immortality. (1 Tim 6:16) The Old Testament Hebrew word for soul is "nephesh" which means "a breathing creature". This is the word used when God created man. (Gen. 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." A man, then, does not HAVE a soul; a man IS a soul.

The immortal soul doctrine can be found in many ancient pagan cultures: Egypt, for example, where the pyramids were built to ease the passage of the Pharaohs soul to Heaven. It is from these sources that it has descended through the ages to become part of the religious teaching of the present generation, not from the true teachings of the Bible.

Some use this scripture, Mat. 10:28, to say that souls are immortal, "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." A closer look, shows, rather, that souls are capable of being DESTROYED. See also Eze. 18:4. "The soul that sins shall DIE."

The author of this doctrine is Satan the Devil; and there is a very good reason why he wants us to believe it. We shall understand as we read further.

THE SPIRIT OF MAN

It says in Job 32:8 that there is a spirit in man; but the nature of that spirit is not that of an immortal soul. 1 Cor. 2:11 explains: "What man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him?" The spirit of man is a spiritual essence imparted to the human brain making it possible for human understanding. This spirit is not given to animals and although they are intelligent, animal brain output with even the same size brain cannot compare with the vast output of the human mind. It is because of this spirit that man has been given dominion over the animals and over the whole earth.

Dan. 4 tells of King Nebuchadnezzar who in his pride failed to give glory to the God of Heaven, claiming that the kingdom was his by virtue of his own greatness. God punished him by taking away this human spirit and sent him into exile to live as a beast for seven years. Afterwards his senses and his kingdom were restored to him.

We see, then, that without the human spirit that God has given to us, we would be the same as any other beast of the earth and actually only slightly more intelligent than a monkey.

THE SPIRIT OF GOD

Just as the spirit of man makes it possible to have human understanding, the spirit of God makes it possible to have spiritual understanding or knowledge of God. Continuing in 1 Cor 2:11, "Even so, the things of God knoweth no man but the spirit of God. The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God for they are spiritually discerned." So without the spirit of God, Godly understanding is as inaccessible to man as human understanding is to a beast without the spirit of man. Neither the spirit of man nor the spirit of God ought to be mistaken for an immortal soul because they have no consciousness part from the brain. Psm 146:4 states very clearly "His breath goeth forth; he returneth to his earth; in that very day his THOUGHTS PERISH!"

THE SPIRIT OF LIFE

One can take apart an elephant or an amoeba down to the tiniest particle and never find a part to label "life" because life is not a physical thing. Webster's defines spirit this way: "Life, will, etc. regarded as separate from matter". So life could be defined as a spiritual essence imparted to physical matter.

Some use this scripture, Ecc 12:7, to prove that souls return to God at death. "Then shall the dust return to the earth where it was and the spirit shall return to God who gave it." But in comparing this scripture with Gen. 2:7 or Psm. 146:4, we see that the spirit spoken of here is the breath or spirit of life. The spirit of life which returns to God is not the same thing as an immortal soul. The spirit of life is simply the essence of life that has been imparted to physical matter returning to God who is the source of all life. The immortal soul idea is that of a complete conscious spiritual body coming out of a person at death. There is a spiritual body that we shall be given, but this body is not given in the day of our death. It is given, rather, at the RESURRECTION of the dead as we shall see.

THE STATE OF THE DEAD

So now we understand that there is no immortal soul which leaves the body at death. But what, then, is the state of the dead? There are several very plain scriptures showing the state of the dead to be that of total unconsciousness.

Ecc 9:46 says, "For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope; for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they shall die, but the DEAD KNOW NOT ANY THING, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their LOVE, and their HATRED, and their ENVY is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun."

Ecc 9:10 says, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might for there is no WORK, nor DEVICE, nor KNOWLEDGE, nor WISDOM, in the grave whither thou goest."

Ps. 6:5 says, "In death there is NO REMEMBRANCE OF THEE. In the grave, who shall give thee thanks?"

Ps. 115:17 says, "The dead praise not the Lord; neither any that go down into silence."

Ecc 3:18 says, "...for that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts. Even one thing befalleth them. As the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they all have one breath, so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast for all is vanity. All go to one place; all are of the dust and all turn to dust again."

AFTERLIFE EXPERIENCE

What about the accounts of people who say that when they were "dead" on the operating table, they had an afterlife experience? First of all we know that God CANNOT lie. We either believe what he says or we don't. His word clearly shows that the dead are unconscious and perished. The answer is that there are very real demons and they influence people's minds and actually make their abode in human beings. There are several accounts in the New Testament of Jesus Christ casting out devils or demons. Demons are spirits and cannot die, so when their human dies they must come out and take up abode elsewhere. The demon coming out of a person upon his death and even hovering over the operating table is the true "immortal soul". Everyone does not have this afterlife experience because everyone does not have a demon within them. Now we see why Satan has instigated the immortal soul doctrine; because it gives evil spirits free access to dwell in and influence the minds of human beings while the humans remain ignorant of it and actually think that they are believing in a doctrine of God.

This also explains the phenomenon of reincarnation that people have experienced in remembering several lives they have lived. It is the demon in them who has actually lived those other lives inside other human beings. The demon could carry into the next person the memories of those former lives. This experience deceives people into believing in a form of immortality by hoping that they will live again as another person when actually the demon will simply go on to another receptive mind at the death of the present human instrument.

PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED

There are several plain statements in both the Old and New Testaments showing that the punishment given to the wicked is death, not eternal torment. This has been so from the beginning. God spoke to Adam and Eve saying "If you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall die." (Gen. 2:17) God did not say "You shall go to a place of eternal torment!" It was Satan who deceived the woman saying "You SHALL NOT surely die!" This lie has been believed since then in the doctrine of the immortal soul.

Deut. 30:15 says, "See, I set before you this day life and good and death and evil; therefore choose life."

Rom. 8:13 says, "If you live after the flesh, you shall DIE."

Rom. 6:23 says, "The wages of sin is DEATH."

Eze. 18:4 says, "The soul that sins shall DIE!"

Jesus said in Jhn 8:24, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall DIE in your sins."

Finally, Rev. 21:8 says, "But the fearful and unbelieving and the abominable... shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the SECOND DEATH."

WHAT IS HELL?

The Old Testament Hebrew word for Hell is "sheol" which means "grave or pit". This is the word used in Psm 9:17 which says, "The wicked shall be turned into Hell."

There are three words in the New Testament translated "hell". Understanding these will make clear the context of the scripture. The first is "hades" or the place of departed souls, a GRAVE. This means the same as the Hebrew "sheol".

The second word is "gehenna" which is the Valley of Hinnom located outside Jerusalem where garbage was dumped as well as the bodies of criminals. Because fires were burning there continually, Jesus used this place as an analogy of the coming lake of fire which will burn up the wicked. Those who, after having been called and converted, then deliberately reject the salvation of God shall be resurrected from the dead to face their second death in the lake of fire. From this death there shall be no resurrection. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when they realize that this is their fate as in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The wicked shall not burn forever in this fire, but shall die and burn up to become ashes under the feet of the righteous. (Mal. 4:13, Rev. 20:14,21:8)

This fire has been called "eternal fire" (Mat. 18:8) because its results are eternal not because it will continue to burn forever. In Jude 7, Sodom and Gomorrah are given as an example of suffering eternal fire. They are not still burning today, but the results of their burning are permanent. These cities have never been rebuilt.

This fire has also been called "unquenchable" fire. This also does not mean that it will burn forever. To quench a fire means to put it out. No one shall quench or put out this fire until it has consumed everything in it. (Luk. 3:17)

The third New Testament word translated "hell" is "tartaroo" which means "to incarcerate in eternal torment or restraint". This word is used only ONCE in the New Testament in 2 Pet. 2:4. The context of this scripture is that ANGELS are cast down into this place of torment or restraint. Rev. 20:10 is another scripture showing that the fate of Satan is eternal torment. Satan and his angels are spirits and cannot die. So now it is clear why the world has been led to believe this false doctrine of eternal torment in hell. It is the fate of Satan and his angels, not of human beings; and Satan, who is the deceiver of this world, would have the world believe that it is their fate too.

ARE WE GOING TO HEAVEN?

Jesus Christ came throughout all Galilee preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God. (Mat. 4:23) This kingdom is sometimes referred to as the Kingdom of Heaven. So, many assume that we are going to Heaven to enter into the kingdom. But the scriptures show plainly that the kingdom is to be established here on the earth.

See Dan. 2:31-44, esp vs 35 and 44. A dream of Nebuchadnezzar reveals four kingdoms which should come to rule over all the earth. The Babylonian empire was the first of these four. Notice

(vs 44) that the kingdom which the God of Heaven shall set up shall break up all these other kingdoms and shall "fill the whole earth". (vs 35)

See Rev. 11:15. Jesus Christ as the king of this kingdom, is returning to the earth at the last trumpet to take over and rule all the governments and kingdoms of this world.

How, then, shall we inherit this kingdom or enter into it? It says plainly in 1 Cor. 15:50 that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. So, in order to inherit it, we must become spirit beings. We must be given an incorruptible, immortal, spiritual body. See 1 Cor. 15:53 "For this corruptible must put on incorruption..." But when is this immortal body given to us? Is it upon our death? NO! This happens at the RESURRECTION of the dead. See 1 Cor. 15:52 "...the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed." And when does the resurrection of the dead occur? Does it happen immediately when we die? See 1 Cor. 15:52 "We shall all be changed, 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." So we see that the resurrection takes place at the last trumpet. This is also when the return of Jesus Christ takes place. (1 Thes 4:16-17) The resurrection which takes place at the second coming of Christ is called the "first resurrection". (Rev. 20:46) Those who are privileged to enter into the Kingdom of God in the first resurrection shall be priests of God and Christ and shall reign with him for 1000 years. The rest of the dead or all those who have not been called of God in this age, shall be resurrected to physical life at the end of the thousand years and shall then be given their opportunity for salvation. (Eze. 37, Rev. 20:5)

We shall, after we meet our Lord in the air, return to earth with him and reign together on the earth over the nations. (Study Rev. 5:10, 20:46, Luk. 19:16-17, Rev. 2:26-27, 3:21) This, then, is our reward and our heritage, not Heaven, to rule over the earth and eventually the entire universe with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. (Heb. 1:6-9)

Why do you suppose that men have been deceived into believing that they shall ascend into Heaven rather than reign on the earth? This is because the ultimate goal and purpose of the god of this world, Satan, is to ASCEND INTO HEAVEN in rebellion against God and depose him, setting up himself as God. You can read of this plan in Isa. 14:12-17. By making mankind believe that our reward is to ascend into Heaven, Satan has deceived us into participating in his own rebellious thoughts and rejecting the true plan of God for us.

Jesus Christ said very plainly in Jhn. 3:13 (and he spoke this in the context that people did not believe him when he spoke of heavenly things) "No man hath ascended up to Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man which is in Heaven."

There are scriptures which have been "interpreted" to show that we go to Heaven. A closer look reveals the truth. Here are two examples:

DID ELIJAH GO TO HEAVEN?

The account of Elijah is found in 2 Ki. 2:1-18. The first verse speaks of Elijah being taken up into Heaven by a whirlwind. Was Jesus lying, then, when he said that no man has ascended into

Heaven? Did he overlook what happened to Elijah? How do we reconcile these two scriptures? The answer is that the Bible speaks of three heavens. The first is the heaven where the fowls fly. This is probably the heaven into which Elijah was taken as whirlwinds are atmospheric phenomena. The second is the heaven where the stars and planets abide. The THIRD heaven is spoken of in 2 Co. 12:2 as the throne of God, the place to which Jesus ascended. Into this third Heaven, no one has gone except Jesus himself. In reading the account of Elijah, notice that when he was taken up, none of the sons of the prophets thought that he had gone to the Heaven of God's throne. They, rather, sent out a searching party for him, thinking that he might be on some mountain or valley. (2 Ki. 2:16-18) The reason for his being taken up in this manner is probably that God intended for Elijah to die and be buried in an unknown place in the same way that he did for Moses. (Deut. 34:56) Because Moses and Elijah were so famous, their tomb, if known, likely would have become a source of idolatry to the Israelites.

THE TRANSFIGURATION

There are three accounts of the transfiguration. These are Mat. 16:2-8, 17:1-8, Mrk. 9:1-10, and Luk. 9:27-36. Some believe that because Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus that it was a vision of them in Heaven. But these scriptures do not mention Heaven at all. The key scripture is this: "I tell you of a truth that there be some standing here which shall not taste of death until they see the KINGDOM OF GOD." So, then, EIGHT DAYS LATER, Peter, James, and John were privileged to see this vision of the Kingdom of God. We have already seen that the Kingdom of God is to be composed of spirit beings reigning on this earth, not in Heaven; and that the kingdom has not been set up yet, but will be when Jesus returns. So this vision has nothing to do with saints in Heaven. Moses and Elijah appeared temporarily in VISION (They are dead today and awaiting the resurrection) in order to fulfill the promise of Jesus to his disciples that they should see the Kingdom of God. By seeing this vision of the glorified Moses and Elijah and Jesus, the disciples would then be able to bear witness of the truth of the kingdom into which we may also enter in glory.

SPIRITUAL DEATH AND LIFE

What about the scripture which says "For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh but live according to God in the spirit." (1 Pe. 4:6) Does this scripture mean that Jesus, when he died, became a spirit and went to a spirit world to preach to those who were dead? Does it mean that Jesus, when he was alive, preached to dead corpses? Well, the first answer cannot be true if the state of the dead, as we have shown, is total unconsciousness. The second answer is ludicrous.

One answer to this is that the gospel was preached (while they were alive) to them that are (now) dead. Another answer is that the Bible reveals that there is a spiritual definition of death and life besides the obvious physical meaning. Rom. 8:16 says "To be carnally (naturally) minded IS DEATH, but to be spiritually minded IS LIFE and peace." So, the carnal or natural mind, that is the mind without the spirit of God, may be physically alive but spiritually it is dead.

Manifestations of carnal mindedness are found in 1 Cor. 3:15. These are envy, strife, divisions, and following after men rather than Jesus Christ, and not being subject to the laws of God. (Rom.

8:7) This, then, is the state of those with only the spirit of man. (See also Eph. 2:1, 1 Tim. 5:6, and Jas. 2:26 These are the "dead" to whom the gospel was preached, that they might be raised from a condition of spiritual death (in the flesh) and receive the spirit of life, the holy spirit of God, becoming subject to the laws of God and live according to God in the spirit.