

Lesson 13 - The State of the Dead, Spiritualism & Immortal Soul

What happens when a man dies? That's a question that has puzzled people all through the ages. And today we have many theories. Some say he dead go to heaven, others say they go to hell or purgatory, and still others say the dead sleep in the grave until the resurrection, and there are also those who believe in reincarnation. However, we want to know what the Bible says, for none of us have died and come back - except Jesus. In Revelation 1:18, He states that He alone has the answer to this important subject. **"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."**

Since the garden of Eden, in the beginning, the devil has sought to confuse people about death. In *Genesis 3:1* the devil questioned Eve. **"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"**

Eve was quick to run to God's defense in **verses 2-3**, **"And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die."** And then came the first recorded lie in the Bible.

Verse 4, **"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die."** How cunning! Here the devil admits you are going to die, but not "surely." And that lie has come down through the ages so that the majority of people in the world believe that people are dead, but not "*surely* dead!" That's why the majority of people would not take a walk in a dark grave yard at midnight for anything. The reason is they believe all those folks are dead, by not "surely dead."

Again, for every one of God's beautiful truths, Satan has a counterfeit. He said, "You will not surely die" and he was a liar!

John 8:44 says he is the father of lies.

Let's go then to the Word and see the truth. Going back to the beginning of life in **Genesis 2:7**, "**And 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.**" God formed man of the dust (earth). In fact, a few years ago someone analyzed how much the average man was worth: the iron, iodine, zinc, et cetera. They found the average man was worth about 93 cents!

Here we have two elements: a clay body and God's breath of life. Through the union of these, man *became* a living soul. It's important to note that man was not given a "soul" as something separate from the body, but *became* a soul through the union of body and God's breath. Body + Breath = Soul. Soul - Breath = Death. Let's see this procedure in reverse in **Psalms 104:29**, "**Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.**" Take away the breath, it equals DEATH. **Verse 30** puts it again in forward, "**Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.**" You send forth "spirit" or breath and they are created.

Now let's discuss the teaching some of us are acquainted with regarding the "never dying soul" or "immortal soul." You will often hear people say when a man dies his "soul" goes on to heaven or hell. Now I want to shock you. There are over 1,700 references to the word "soul" in the Bible, and not even *once* it is mentioned as immortal or undying. That ought to shock you! There is only *one text* in the Bible that even uses the word immortal. **1 Timothy 1:17**, "**Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.**" Only God is immortal. You say what about the "immortal soul?" It's *not* taught in

the Bible! The word "immortality" is used only five times in the Bible and it never speaks of the "immortal soul."

What then is a soul? Remember in Genesis 2:7 the body and breath equals a soul. *YOU* are a soul. A soul is not a little person inside you who upon your death goes flying out! The Bible teaches the exact opposite. Notice **Ezekiel 18:4, "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: *the soul that sinneth, it shall die.*"** Souls *die* because souls are living beings like a father, or son. Let's look back a few other verses to see what a soul really is. You will find in every case it means a man or animal, any creature with the union of a body and breath. **Acts 2:41, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand *souls.*"** The Old Testament says the same in **Genesis 46:27, "And the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, were *two souls:* all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten."** **Acts 27:37, "And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen *souls.*"** Man is not the only thing that is a soul. Notice **Revelation 16:3, "And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea."** All *souls* in the sea died. So the Bible is abundantly clear on this matter. In our next lesson we will learn where this deception of the immortal soul came from.

Our next question, What *does* happen when a man dies?

Ecclesiastes 12:7 answers simply, "**Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.**"

Now that word *spirit* is the Hebrew word "ruwach" [Strong's H7307]. It is translated 117 times as "wind" and 33 times as "breath." This

word "spirit" in any concordance or dictionary means "breath."
That's why it *returns* to God who gave it. Notice the many other Scriptures where spirit simply means the breath of life. **Job 27:3, "All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils."** Now what did God put in man's nostrils? **Genesis 2:7,** "The breath of life. Let's look at Jesus on the cross. **Luke 23:46, "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."** "Into thy hands I commend My spirit" or breath of life. Jesus didn't go to paradise until the following Sunday, three days later. After His death He simply died and His breath or spirit returned to God.

You see friends, the breath or spirit of all living things has its source in God alone. The spark of "life" man cannot duplicate. Men have tried, but God alone holds that source of life. Let's illustrate it like this. Man breaths breath, so does a horse, and so does a bird. Electricity is the same. An oven uses it, the elevator uses it, lights use it, different appliances use it, but it's all the same source of life. On one side we have a light bulb; let's say it represents Adam. On the other side we have a source of life, electricity; let's say it represents God's breath of life. Unite them and we have "*life*." Take it away and life ceases to exist. So it is with man. **James 2:26. "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."** So when a man dies, his breath or spirit returns back to God, and the body returns to dust. The same happens with animals. The Bible clearly teaches this. **Ecclesiastes 3:19- 20, "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 have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is**

vanity. All go unto *one place*; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again."

Next question, What happens in the grave? Where are the dead? Are they in heaven or hell? Let's see what the apostles said in **Acts 2:29**, "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. ... For David *is not ascended into the heavens*: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, " David is *not* in heaven. Let's see what Jesus said, and here we come to a very important key. **John 11:11- 14**, "These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead."

Death is referred to as a sleep 66 times in the Bible. Notice these references:

Deuteronomy 31:16, "And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; ..."

2 Samuel 7:12, "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou (David) shalt sleep with thy fathers, ..."

1 Kings 1:21, "Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, ..." **1 Kings 2:10**, "So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David."

1 Kings 11:21, "And when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers, ... "

1 Kings 14:20, "And the days which Jeroboam reigned were two and twenty years: and he slept with his fathers, ..."

1 Kings 14:31, "And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David." ...

1 Kings 15:8, "And Abijam slept with his fathers; and they buried him in the city of David:" ...

1 Kings 15:24, "And Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David ..."

1 Kings 16:6, "So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in Tirzah:" ...

1 Kings 16:28, "So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria:" ...

1 Kings 22:40, "So Ahab slept with his fathers; ..."

1 Kings 22:50, "And Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David ..."

2 Kings 8:24, "And Joram slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: ..."

2 Kings 10:35, "And Jehu slept with his fathers: and they buried him in Samaria. ..."

2 Kings 13:9, "And Jehoahaz slept with his fathers; and they buried him in Samaria: ..." Job 3:13, "For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest,"

Job 7:21, "... for now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be."

Psalms 76:5, "The stouthearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep: ..."

Jeremiah 51:39, "... I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the LORD."

Daniel 12:2, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, ..."

Matthew 9:24, "He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth." John 11:11, "These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; ..."

1 Corinthians 15:6, "... but some are fallen asleep."

1 Thessalonians 4:13, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, ..."

2 Peter 3:4, "... for since the fathers fell asleep, ..."

"Sleep" is clearly the biblical term for death. Look up the rest of the texts which refer to death as "sleep," they are: (2 Kings 13:13; 2 Kings 14:16, 22, 29; 15:7, 22, 38; 16:20; 20:21; 21:18; 24:6; 2 Chronicles 9:31; 12:16; 14:1; 16:13; 21:1; 26:2, 23; 27:9; 28:27; 32:33; 33:20; Job 14:12; Psalm 13:3, 76:6; 90:5; Jeremiah 51:57; Matthew 27:52; Mark 5:39; Luke 8:52; Acts 7:60; 13:36; 1 Corinthians 11:30; 15:18, 20; 1 Thessalonians 4:14, 15).

Clearly, then, in both Old and New Testaments this is the term the Bible writers used to describe death. To them it was a sleep in Jesus.

Sleep is a beautiful illustration of death. It is like going to bed at night, when we are tired, with assurance of waking in the morning. This takes fear out of death for the Christian. They lie down to sleep, with the quiet assurance that Jesus will awaken them in the morning of the resurrection at His second coming.

We are to regard death as a sound, dreamless sleep. A person may have been in the tomb 1,000 years, but when raised at the resurrection it will seem to him that he merely dozed off for a moment. When angels meet God's resurrected saints at their grave side, it will be like a loving mother greeting her child after a brief nap. **Matthew 24:31, "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."**

Man is not immortal. He is subject to death. But God's people do, indeed, have eternal life now. Eternal life is that miraculous, new, Jesus-filled life, which begins at conversion and will be continued in heaven. God's promise is that His faithful people, who now have eternal life, will not suffer the second death. **Revelation 2:11, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."** From this death there is no resurrection. The first death, which all men must die, does not remove the gift of eternal life. It only interrupts it while the saints sleep briefly. It continues in heaven after the resurrection.

Think of it for a moment. If your mother died and was in heaven, would she be happy? How could she be seeing you struggle and seeing war, poverty, problems, and hardship? *No!* God's plan is much better! Our loved ones are peacefully sleeping. Let's go on now and see what the Bible says. **Ecclesiastes 9:5- 6, "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."** The "dead know not anything, no love, have," et cetera.

Here, however, we run into a real question. If the dead sleep in Jesus, and they know not anything, then what about all we read and hear about dead people who seem to return and appear to others? What about the spirits of the dead that communicate with the living, and these spirit beings who channel messages? What about those who actively communicate with various loved ones who have died? If this is really our deceased loved ones and truly the dead who have come back, then the Bible is a lie. Make no mistake about it, the devil can work miracles too. **Revelation 16:14, "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."** **2 Thessalonians 2:9, "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders."**

The devil take advantage of grieving hearts and knows people would do anything to see their loved ones, and he can impersonate them to make people believe his lie, that "you shall not surely die." All the spiritualism, the New Age, and witchcraft is based on this

teaching. Satan can deceive us unless we know the truth. The Bible makes it clear. **Job 7:8- 10, "The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more: thine eyes are upon me, and I am not. As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more. He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more."** Job 16:22, **"When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return."**

In Ecclesiastes 9:10, God says **"there is no work, device, or knowledge in the grave."** **"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."** As a young boy, I remember going to my first funeral. There in an open casket lay a deceased gentleman. As the service went on the minister said, "I can just see Mr. ___ up in heaven, walking on streets of gold, in the company of angels." And I remember thinking, "That's funny, I am looking at Mr. ___ and he's right here in the casket!" It became more complicated though when we got to the grave site where the casket was lowered. Here the same minister then spoke of how we didn't have to grieve because on the resurrection day Mr. ___ would rise from the grave and be caught up to heaven! I was confused! I saw Mr. ___ in the casket, then the preacher said he was in heaven, and now he said he's in the grave waiting for the resurrection? Something's wrong! Where is He? Let's make it simple. First do the dead praise the Lord? **Psalms 115:17, "The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence."**

Let's put it all together. One passage of Scripture makes it so simple. **Job 14:12- 14, "So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of**

their *sleep*. O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, *until thy wrath be past*, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come." Three points. Man is in the grave until: A. "The heavens be no more." 2 Peter 3:10, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." B. "Till thy wrath is past." Revelation 15:1, "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God." C. "Till my change comes." When will the dead be changed? At the second coming! 1 Corinthians 15:51- 54, "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but 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, 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." Notice all three passages refer to the second coming of Jesus. It just makes sense! If you really didn't die, then why would you need a resurrection? Oh friends, or eternal life will begin at the second coming! Mark 10:29- 30, "And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions;

and in the world to come eternal life." So when we die, we wait to be resurrected, and while we wait for the resurrection, we sleep in the grave. **Job 17:13, "If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness."**

And God will not forget you. He has a guardian angel that follows you through life, death and the funeral. This angel marks the grave site when the Lord comes He will tell that angel to "gather my elect from the four corners of the earth." **(Matthew 24:31)** Jesus shall say to the north "give up" and to the south, "keep not back" bring my sons and daughters from afar.

There will be two groups of people when Jesus comes. The righteous and the wicked. Both will come up at the resurrection. And both are in the grave until then. None of the dead are in purgatory or in heaven, all are waiting until Jesus comes. **1 Thessalonians 4:13- 18, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."** That's beautiful! The dead shall *rise!* When will they rise? When Jesus comes! Then we *all* go together. The Lord will raise our loved ones who have been sleeping! All are going

together, getting excited together, and are changed together! Then this mortal becomes immortal and this corruptible puts on incorruption. Jesus said in **John 14:1- 3**, "**Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.**"

When Jesus comes, the wicked will be slain by the brightness of His coming. **2 Thessalonians 2:8**, "**And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.**" They will not live again until after the 1,000 years. **Revelation 20:5**, "**But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.**" In verse **6**, God says blessed are the ones in the first resurrection! Therefore we can look forward to that glorious day as did Paul! **2 Timothy 4:6- 8**, "**For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.**" Paul knew he would receive his reward on *that* day - Christ's appearing.

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life." It's like the allegory of Death and Hell. Death and Hell, (Hell meaning "the grave"), made a covenant about Jesus, Death said, "Hell, if I kill Him will you hold Him?" Hell said, "Yes!" So they shook hands in agreement. On Friday Jesus died, and Death burst into applause! Death said, "Okay Hell, I killed Him, now you hold Him." That was Friday

evening. Early Sabbath, Death went down and yelled, "Hell, have you still got Him?" Hell said, "Don't worry Death, I got Him! The tomb is sealed!" Sabbath noon, Death asked again, and Hell said, "I told you not to worry, I got Him." Sabbath night before going to bed Death asked again and Hell affirmed it.

Early Sunday morning Death went down and cried "Hell do you *still* got Him?" And, Hell said, "Well Death, it was like this. I had Him, but suddenly a great light came from glory. An Angel came down here, and when he came, the devil took off, the soldiers dropped as dead, the stone rolled away, and He got up and walked out!" And Hell went on to say, "I have something else to tell you. Not only did He walk out, but He insulted both of us! He looked back and with a mighty scorn He turned and said, "O Death, where is thy sting and grave where is thy victory" I am He that was dead and now am alive forever more!

And because He lives, we too shall live! For death will be the last enemy destroyed. **Revelation 21:4, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."**

Let's determine that whether we live to see Jesus come, or if we die and sleep until the resurrection day, we will be ready at each moment to meet our Lord.

BIBLE PASSAGES ABOUT DEATH EXPLAINED.

Question: Didn't Jesus tell the thief "Today you will be with me in paradise?"

The text in question is **Luke 23:42- 43**, "**And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.**"

From reading this it appears that Jesus did promise the thief he would go to paradise that day. However if that's true we are faced with three problems.

1. The thief did not ask to go that day. He had his theology straight, and asked to be remembered when Jesus comes in His kingdom.
2. Jesus did not go that day. Three days after He told Mary not to touch Him, for He had not ascended to the Father (**John 20:17**).
3. The thief could not have gone that day! **John 19:30- 34** records how the thieves legs were broken as the sabbath began. This was because the Jews did not want crosses up on the sabbath, so they would take them down and break the legs of those on the cross to hasten death and prevent escape. The thieves lived on after Jesus died.

The simple answer to this is in the Greek text. Greek does not have punctuation as we know it. This is supplied by scholars as they translated into English. However in Luke 23:43 the scholars simply misplaced a comma that changed the entire meaning of the verse. They put the comma *before* the word today. Change it, and the text is in perfect harmony with all the other Bible verses. It now reads "**Verily I say unto thee today, thou shalt be with me in paradise.**" Jesus gave the thief the assurance of salvation that day, and will remember him just when he asked to be, when Jesus comes in His kingdom.

Question: Doesn't Paul teach "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord?"

This text has been misquoted for so long, people assume that's what it says. It doesn't. Let's read it - **2 Corinthians 5:8, "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."**

The question here is WHEN will this take place? Paul would rather be absent from the body and present with the Lord. So would all of us!

Notice this is Second Corinthians or the second letter Paul wrote the Corinthians. In the first letter **I Corinthians 15** Paul had already told them WHEN he would be absent from the body and with the Lord. **Verses 51- 55, "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but 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, 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?"** Also in His closing testimony Paul again affirmed when. **2 Tim 4:6- 8, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."**

