

Afraid To Die?



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Afraid To Die?

"Nothing is surer than death and taxes," goes the old adage. But, for all its familiarity, thousands die daily, and all of us have experienced the loss of loved ones.

Death remains a dreaded enemy, not a friend. What is death? What happens when you die? Do you have an immortal

soul that goes either to an ever-burning hell or up to heaven?

It's time you saw the *Bible* answer.



Crusty old Harry Truman (no relation to the late president), who lived near Spirit Lake, Washington, said “If this mountain goes I’m going with it.” And go he did. But where?

Harry allowed as how he had a secret hideaway with a couple of barrels of whiskey near where he lived, “and, if that old blanket-blank goes, I’m just going to sit there and wait.”

In the awesome blast of Mount St. Helen’s—bigger than any other blast known to man in modern times (some say the equivalent of 50 million tons of TNT!)—it is doubtful crusty Harry Truman had a chance to make for his hide-away and his whiskey. He was not alone.

Perhaps the death toll will never truly be known, for campers, hikers, tourists and others seeking the excitement of venturing near to the still-smoldering mountain were simply buried or blown away by the awesome blast.

Like the long-buried citizens of Pompeii, many of those people will *never* be found, their bodies slowly decaying under tons of ash and rock.

But what *really happened*, when they died?

Is Harry Truman actually *still alive*, sitting now in his own special compartment in heaven reserved for crusty, cantankerous old men?

Are the husbands and wives, children, geologists, hikers and campers all evenly distributed between heaven and hell?

And how can you know?

There is no purely *pragmatic* answer—no “scientific” answer—possible. The answer to this and other perplexing questions involving life after death, “heaven” and “hell” must lie in the spiritual realm.

The Bible is God’s handbook to man: that source of knowledge and information which man *could not* have discovered for himself—*revealed* knowledge. The Bible is not intended to be the sum total of all knowledge, but it is an outline, or a *guide*, from the great Creator and Maker of mankind; it explains what man *is*, where he is going, why he was placed on this earth and what human life is all about!

If you ask people to express what death really *is*, the answers will be quite varied and sometimes very vague. One said, “I guess death is the end of life.” Another said, “I don’t know. I feel it’s the end of something, and sometimes the beginning of something else. I think that you just can’t stop living all of a sudden. I don’t know. I think there’s got to be something after.”

Still another said, “My definition of death is to leave this earth, and I’d say it would be a termination of your life.”

But these and countless other opinions like them are merely the sum total of those impressions, traditions, philosophies, teachings and doctrines that have gradually formed and shaped the opinions

of their owners.

None of these opinions is the result of either scientific or pragmatic investigation; and certainly none is the result of careful research in the *Bible*, which is the ultimate and final authority on the subject of death.

Hated Death

Our daily news is sprinkled with dreaded information concerning death. Hardly a radio broadcast or a telecast goes by but that a fateful plane crash, a terrible automobile or bus collision, fires, tornadoes or automobile accidents tell us of the grisly aftermath of yet another terrible tragedy wherein people die.

Hardly a day goes by, especially in our larger urban areas, but that our daily news is seasoned with the gruesome details of the latest domestic shootout, murder-suicide or kidnap-murder of a helpless child.

Add to this the countless thousands who die from “natural causes” (including the daily obituaries in hundreds of newspapers containing columns of names of those who have died in their 60s, 70s and 80s through various diseases), and the death toll each day is staggering—enormous.

When one of these deaths strikes close to home, it is always as if you have been subjected to a terrible blow. The unacceptable trauma and shock of hearing of the death of a loved one has sometimes caused, merely through the dread, fear, hatred and unacceptability of the event, another death!

Spouses have followed their mates to the grave in less than days because of the all-consuming *dread* and fear of the hated unknown—death—that took their loved one away from them.

Instinctively we realize death is our enemy. We abhor death, shun it, hate to look at it, don't want to come in contact with it.

Yet it happens to all of us; we will all have to face it someday. Should we really *fear* death?

Death is Common

Solomon said, "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" (Ecclesiastes 3:19,10).

Perhaps you have heard the old saying, "I had a dog whose name was Rover, and when he died he died all over." Though it seems to insult the casually assumed religiosity of some people, when men and women die, they, too, die "all over."

The Bible says so.

As God's Word states, "As the one dieth, *so* [in like fashion, in like manner] dieth the other."

Solomon explained that a man has no "preeminence" over mere beasts when it comes to death. All have the same physical, chemical existence; each depends upon the intake of air, water and food, the continual replenishment of a metabolic system which is temporal, transitory, earthly, and which is subject to the process of aging and final death.

Dogs, cows, birds and humans all breathe of the same air. They all eat of the foods that come from the ground. They all drink the same water. They all are sustained by beating hearts, flowing bloodstreams, vital organs and systemic design which cause their

fleshly forms to function.

Interfere with these vital organs and systemic functions, and they're severely injured or they die.

When a dog, a cow or a bird dies, it dies exactly as does a man. When a man dies, he dies exactly the same *kind of death* that takes a cow in the field. Your *Bible says so!*

The Bible makes it very clear that death is a state of total *unconsciousness*, the complete absence of conscious thought or mind.

"...To him that is joined to all 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 anything..." (Ecclesiastes 9:4).

There is no problem understanding the subject of death and life after death if one accepts the Bible, and the Bible *alone*, at face value.

It is because millions have departed *from* the revealed knowledge of God's Word and believe the ancient pagan philosophy, the lie of Satan the devil in the Garden of Eden ("You shall not surely die"), and the perverted teachings of modern-day theologians and the pagan mysteries of darkened ages in the past.

What are You?

In order to understand death, we need to understand *life*.

What are we? What is man? "But one in a certain place testified, saying, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

"Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands;

"Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet...We see

Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the *suffering of death*, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should *taste death* for every man” (Hebrews 2:6–9).

God’s Word shows humanity is the absolute apex of the material creation, only a step beneath the creation of *angels*, which are *spirit beings*.

God says, “The Lord Eternal formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man *became* a living soul” (Genesis 2:7).

A soul is what man is—it is what Adam *became*. The Bible does not say Adam *had* a “soul”; it say Adam *was* a soul!

The word used in Genesis for “soul” is the Hebrew *nephesh*. This word is used in many forms, including “body,” “being,” “that one,” “beast,” life,” “soul,” “creature,” etc.

It is used five times of *lower life forms*, including the creatures of the sea floors, *before* it is ever used of man!

In Numbers 19:11, it is used in connection with the word *dead*, explaining that a person would be ceremonially unclean if he touched a *dead nephesh* (soul), or body.

Nephesh has a wide application in Hebrew, including the life, appetite, emotion—the whole being and personality—of the creature or thing being described.

But it never means anything immortal, spiritual or separate from the temporal creature!

In the article “Immortality of the Soul” in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* (Vol. VI, pages 564,566), we read, “The belief that the soul continues its existence after the dissolution of the body is...speculation...nowhere expressly taught in Holy Scripture....

“The belief in the immortality of the soul came to the Jews from

contact with Greek thought and chiefly through the philosophy of Plato, its principal exponent, who was led to it through Orphic and Eleusinian mysteries in which Babylonian and Egyptian views were strangely blended.”

Even during the days of David, the ancient Israelites obviously believed in the resurrection of the *whole body* and not in the “immortality of the soul.” Proof is found in the account of Saul’s mysterious visit to the famous “Witch of Endor” and his demand that the witch produce Samuel.

The witch knew she could not deceive Saul by producing a “disembodied spirit,” or performing a seance in which a “departed soul” was alleged to have spoken. Instead, she created an apparition through an evil power of the *whole body and person* of Samuel, making it appear as if he had been bodily resurrected.

It was the ancient Babylonians and Egyptians who originated the idea of the immortality of the soul. Herodotus, an ancient Greek historian, wrote, “The Egyptians were also the first that asserted that the soul of man is immortal.”

Plato said, “The soul whose inseparable attitude is life will never admit of life’s opposite, death. The soul is shown to be immortal and, since immortal, indestructible...Do we believe there is such a thing as death? To be sure. And is this anything but the separation of the soul from the body?”

Tertulian said, “For some things are known, even by nature: the immortality of the soul, for instance, is held by many...I may use, therefore, the opinion of a Plato when he declares ‘every soul is immortal.’”

Thus one darkened, pagan mind builds upon the supposed “authority” of another darkened, pagan mind, the one so-called

“authority” quoting the other “authority” until the gullible masses begin to believe.

But there is no place in the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, where the words “immortal soul” are ever found!

The Bible does say *this* about the soul: “Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of a son is mine: the soul that sinneth it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4,20).

In this scripture Ezekiel is showing the intense *individuality* of responsibility toward God.

He is showing each creature, each *individual*, is responsible for his own deeds and actions. The Hebrew word is *nephesh* and should more appropriately be translated: “Behold, all individuals are mine—as the being of the father, so also the being [life] of the son; the person that sins, *he* shall die!”

No matter whether you agree with the literal meaning of the Hebrew word or not (and it would be ridiculous to disagree, since every biblical authority could corroborate it), and even if you decided to cling tenaciously to a totally false belief (i.e., that the soul is “immortal”), you are faced with an incredible dilemma! For the Bible says, “The soul that sinneth *it* [that soul!] shall die!”

Therefore, the Bible says souls *die*.

Two Opposites: Eternal Life and Death

Why do so few believe the Bible means exactly what it says? Why do so many choose to completely pervert the Scriptures until they read *backward*? An exaggerated charge?

Then read the most remembered scripture in the whole Bible, John 3:16:

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life!”

What does it say? Does it say we human beings *automatically* possess eternal life, that we are, by nature, immortal beings temporarily encased in a physical body?

No. It says we will *perish* unless we believe on Jesus Christ!

If we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior, and then begin to *follow* Christ, allowing Him to live His perfect life within us, doing the *will* of our Father in heaven, we may *then* be granted the great free gift of God: “everlasting life”! Notice the *two opposites*:

1. Man may *perish*. We are mortal, subject to death, without any “everlasting” life inherent within us.

2. By belief in Jesus Christ we may be given something we *do not now have*: “everlasting life”!

But notice the manner in which the pagan-influenced, so-called “Christian” world interprets this cherished text of the Bible. It is as if they would *paraphrase* it thusly: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not live everlasting life in hell, but live everlasting life in heaven.” *Is this what the Bible says?*

No.

But it what millions *believe*.

Why not just believe the *Bible*, instead of ancient pagan superstitions and doctrines of Satan?

Your Bible says the wages of sin is *death* (Romans 6:23), not eternal life!

Death is the *absence* of life; complete, utter unconsciousness; an inert, lifeless state in which there is no animation, no thought,

no action or deed—no mind!

As human beings—*nephesh*—we are temporal creatures, subject to death, just as are the animals. While we have the potential to be begotten of God, and *become* eternally alive, which the animals do not, during this earthly experience, we are *mortal* and subject to death!

What Happens When We Die?

Perhaps it is moribund to contemplate one's death, and yet it is as sure as the rising of the sun. It will come eventually.

Therefore why not attempt to *understand* it?

God inspired Job to write, "O that thou wouldst hide me in the grave...that thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me" (Job 14:13).

Notice the Bible description of the state of the dead: "If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my *change* come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee; thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands" (Job 14:14,15).

Job wrote of the grave as a "waiting" place, and spoke of the voice of God calling the dead from their graves.

Jesus said, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which 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 [Greek: judgment] (John 5:28,29).

Notice that even those who are dead and in their graves, and are those who have "done good," are *not* hearing the voice of God while they are dead; their death is spoken of as complete oblivion, unconsciousness of the passing of time. They *await* a time when

they *shall*, in the future, hear the voice of God.

Notice, too, that both classifications of people, good and evil, are mentioned as being *in their graves*. Neither the good nor the evil are living elsewhere, either in heaven or in an ever-burning hell fire. They are both *dead*, according to your Savior, Jesus Christ!

The Bible nowhere teaches the "immortality of the soul." Instead it shows the state of the dead to be complete absence of life, oblivion.

Notice what the apostle Paul said when on trial for his life: "But this I admit to you, that according to the Way, which they [the Pharisees and others who accuse him] call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the law or written in the prophets, have a hope in God which these themselves accept [even his accusers admitted this was true!], *that there will be a resurrection of both the just and unjust*" (Acts 24:14,15, RSV).

The apostle Paul, speaking before the rulers of his nation, acknowledged that even the Jewish leadership in the temple believed in the *resurrection*.

That is because the completely heathen, *pagan* teaching of such ancient seers as Plato, Socrates, Herodotus and others had not yet crept into the so-called "Christian" church.

This transformation was not to take place until about the first through the third centuries A.D.

That's why *all* New Testament biblical literature speaks of a *resurrection from the dead*, and nowhere describes "immortal souls" going to either heavenly bliss or an ever-burning hell.

Notice the prophecy of Daniel: "And at that time shall Michael

stand up [at the time of the end], the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And *many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake*, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2).

Notice carefully that this prophecy is for the end time, at the second coming of Christ! These words of Daniel echo those of Jesus Christ, and of the apostle Paul, and all other Bible writers.

They show the oblivious, unconscious dead lying in their graves until a time of *complete change* from death and oblivion to *life*.

The Resurrection Chapter

1 Corinthians 15 is the “resurrection chapter” of the Bible.

Read the whole chapter!

Paul said, “...If Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen.”

Yet today there are many Christian-professing ministers and “believers” who would insist there is no *need* for an alleged “resurrection of the dead,” thus setting aside this massive weight of Scripture, attempting to twist or abrogate even the words of their very Savior!

Think for a moment!

If there were such a thing as an “immortal soul,” and if that “soul” went to heaven or elsewhere when it departed the body at death, then *why* would there be any need for a resurrection?

Why take a corrupted, disease-ridden dead body and reunite it once again hundreds of thousands of years later with a beautiful, spirit-like, uncorrupted “soul”? Does this make any sense to your rational mind?

Does the Bible anywhere justify the ridiculous assumption that after the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament have allegedly spent *thousands of years* in “heaven,” God is someday going to yank their “souls” back *out of* heaven, project them back down to earth into the dust and caves of our physical environment, put those “souls” back *into* those corrupted and wasted (totally disappeared!) bodies, and *then* decide whether they belonged in heaven all the time?

Of course, this whole suggestion is ludicrous.

The reason it is so ludicrous is that the pagan notion of the “immortality of the soul” simply cannot be made to *fit* the Bible!

Yes, there are those today who say there is no necessity for a resurrection of the dead. But they lie, and do not know the truth.

Paul said, “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.”

Notice verse 22: “...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.”

Notice carefully that Jesus is called the *firstfruits* from the dead! That means He has complete precedence. No one has preceded Him! That clearly means that none of the righteous men of the past—Noah, Abraham, Job, Daniel or David—*preceded* Jesus Christ *in life after death*.

The apostle Peter said plainly, “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, until I make thy foes thy footstool” (Acts 2:29–34).

Jesus is the *firstborn* from the dead. He is the first human being in *all history* to be resurrected from the grave to *spirit life*.

As such, He must have the “preeminence in everything.”

These unshakable proofs completely obliterate the idea of the “immortality of the soul.”

Great church bodies on this earth *suppose*, wrongfully, that there are hosts of “saints” occupying various compartments of “heaven.” Some even *pray* to these “saints,” supposing there are *living ears* to hear them.

But the Bible says all these righteous men of old have completely *perished*, are *dead*. In the case of one of the best-known biblical figures of all time, a man “after God’s own heart” and a man who is promised to become a great king over all Israel in the resurrection—David—“*hath not ascended into the heavens*,” but is *dead*.

Study the rest of this famous “resurrection chapter.”

“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the *firstfruits* of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the *resurrection* of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:19–22).

Notice the two *opposites* again. Death is the complete absence of life. The resurrection is life *after death*. But *when?*

Notice the *order* set forth in the Bible.

“But every man *in his own order*: Christ the firstfruits: *afterward* they that *are Christ’s*, at *His coming*” (1 Corinthians 15:23).

Notice how *exactly* this corroborates what Daniel said concerning the great resurrection at the time of the end, what Jesus said concerning the resurrection of the “good” who shall hear the voice of God, and what the apostle Peter said about righteous men of the past who are lying oblivious in their graves!

The Bible says the great resurrection *to life* will come at the precise moment of the second coming of Jesus Christ.

“Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

“For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is *death*” (1 Corinthians 15:24–26).

Yes, death is our great and dreaded *enemy*. We hate it—and most fear it. But Jesus Christ of Nazareth has *conquered death!*

As the apostle Paul urged the Corinthians to understand, if we only had hope during this physical lifetime, we would be of all people most miserable. But, because Jesus Christ has already been resurrected, and promises to raise from the grave those that are His *at His coming*, we may have the *faith* to believe in our Savior, who has not only conquered life but conquered *death!*

Why Be Afraid of Death?

Fear is inextricably interwoven with *doubt*—the unknown.

Ignorance breeds fear.

There must be hundreds of separate “phobias” carefully catalogued in dictionaries. Fear of drowning, fear of heights, fear of

being in enclosed places, fear of the dark, fear of being alone, fear of crowds, etc., etc.

Many people are *terrified* at flying in an airplane.

Why?

Usually because they are ignorant of the principles of aerodynamics. Looking out the window of the airliner, they only see the dizzying heights to which the airplane is climbing, see *nothing* (since air is invisible) between them and the ground. Not understanding that the aerodynamically efficient wings of that aircraft are slicing through the air (which is like a solid mass, analogous to the waters that cover the seas, but different material) at tornadic speeds, they worry and wonder whether the aircraft could go straight down or even *slide backwards* into the ground!

Not realizing that the speed with which the airfoil is moving through the air is sufficient to blow down big buildings (hurricane winds have never been recorded at such velocities, since an anemometer would be blown away), they only sense an undefined, mindless *fear*.

But professional pilots, trained in the knowledge of aerodynamics and the principles of flying, have no such fears. They are in a familiar element and therefore welcome flight, for they are working with known principles and laws.

Once we completely *understand what death is*, and then understand the great promises of God's Word concerning *life after death*, this should rid us of the *fear* of death.

This does not mean to say, on the other hand, that one becomes either nonchalant or reckless concerning death, but only to say that the forbidding, mindless *fear* experienced by so many should be overcome.

Notice what God's Word says concerning ignorance about death: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep [are dead], that your *sorrow* not, even as other which have *no hope*" (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

Notice this ignorance results in the kind of sorrow that is completely *hopeless*. It is this agony of *hopelessness* which seizes so many during a funeral service and burial. Not understanding death, seeing it to be an all-encompassing, dark, forbidding area of the "unknown," wondering whether a loved one is still alive or in some semiconscious state, wondering about reincarnation, flitting off to heaven, or an ever-burning hell, and being mostly *ignorant* of the state of the dead, the death of a loved one is an utterly abhorrent, repugnant thing.

Therefore God's Word says Christians are not to be sorrowful *as others* who are completely *ignorant* of the state of the dead.

Notice! "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him!" (1 Thessalonians 4:14).

How beautifully this corroborates every other scripture on the subject we have read, including the most oft-quoted scripture in the Bible, John 3:16!

We who are Christians *do* believe that Jesus died and rose again, as we have read in 1 Corinthians 15. Therefore we also believe and *know* that those who "sleep in Jesus" (meaning those who are *dead in Christ*) will appear with Jesus Christ *at His coming*, in a resurrection!

Read the rest of this passage: "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 [precede] them which are

asleep [are dead].

“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” (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17).

Perhaps some of the most beautiful and most encouraging words in all the Bible are those of Job, who said, “For *I know that my Redeemer liveth*, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet *in my flesh shall I see God*.

“Whom I shall see for *myself*, and *mine eyes* shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me” (Job 19:25-27).

The implications of this beautiful scripture, together with all that you have read in this brief booklet, are quite clear.

The instant of death, all consciousness ceases.

Try an experiment. Sitting right where you are, blink your eyes just once. It only takes you a *split second*, doesn't it?

Believe it or not, your Bible says the transition from the cessation of *this life* into the life that awaits us is *exactly as quick* at that blinking of your eyes!

It does not matter whether the bodies of righteous men and women have lain in their graves, turning to nothing but dust, for *centuries*. So far as *they* are concerned, their consciousness will only have been interrupted for the millionth of a second.

You cannot clap your hands together rapidly enough to indicate the *conscious passage of time* you will experience between the moment of *your death* and your resurrection to life eternal, if you

receive Jesus Christ as your Savior.

One of the most famous arias of the oratorio “The Messiah” deals with a portion of 1 Corinthians the 15th chapter.

Notice what it says.

“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

“Behold I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep [die], but we shall all *be changed*, in a *moment*, in the *twinkling of an eye*, at the last trump: the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and *we shall be changed!*” (1 Corinthians 15:50-52).

Please do yourself the favor of reading this *entire chapter* of God's Word! It is one of the most beautiful and one of the most *comforting* in all the Bible!

If you read it, and *completely understand it*—you will never again be really *fearful* of death!

We should praise God for His beautiful *truth*, which unshackles the bonds of superstition, heathen and pagan tradition, and opens to our understanding the knowledge that makes us truly *free* from fear! □