

SECRETS UNSEALED PRESENTS

MISUNDERSTOOD TEXTS ON THE STATE OF THE DEAD

By Pastor Stephen Bohr

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#1 The Right to the Tree of Life

The Origin of Life

Genesis 2:7: Not **given** a soul, does not **have** a soul but **is** a soul

“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 being.”

Matthew 16:26

*“For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his **own soul**? Or what will a man give in exchange for **his soul**?”*

Luke 9:25

*“For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is **himself** destroyed or lost?”*

Original Condition: Perfect **body**, perfect **environment**, **laws** of health, **tree** of life

Genesis 2:9: The life of man was **contingent or dependent**. It was **not inherent**. The tree was like a **battery charger**. The immortality of man was **conditional** upon obedience.

“And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”

“The fruit of the tree of life in the Garden of Eden possessed supernatural virtue. To eat of it was to live forever. Its fruit was the antidote of death. Its leaves were for the sustaining of life and immortality.” Testimonies for the Church, volume 8, p. 288

"In order to possess an endless existence, man must continue to partake of the tree of life. Deprived of this, his vitality would gradually diminish until life should become extinct." Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 60.

*"Paul conceived man to be mortal by his original nature, but with the prospect of immortality; this, however, he forfeited when he was driven forth from Eden and therefore from the **tree of life**, which would have **nourished immortality in him**; thus came death through sin."* Wheeler Robinson, The Christian Doctrine of Man, p. 122.

The Origin of Death

Genesis 2:15-17: **God clearly stated** that if they ate of the other tree you will **surely die**

*"Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to tend and keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall **surely die**."*

Genesis 3:4: The first lie contradicts God

*"And the serpent said to the woman, you shall **not surely die**."*

Genesis 3:6: They both **disobeyed**

*"So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, **she** took of its fruit and **ate**. She also gave to her husband with her, and **he ate**."*

Genesis 3:19

*"In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you [**not your body but you**] return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you [**not your body**] are, and to dust you [**not your body**] shall return."*

Genesis 3:22-24: Human beings **no longer had access** to the tree of life to **recharge the battery**. Also **environment, personal habits** wore down the **battery faster**.

- Human beings **had to continue eating** from the tree of life to **continue living** forever.
- If man was immortal by nature **what good would it have done** to forbid the tree?
- If man was immortal **why would Jesus have to die** to give him what he **already possessed**?

*"Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and **live forever**". 23 Therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. 24 So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the Garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to **guard the way to the tree of life**."*

Life Spans before the Flood

Genesis 5: The battery was **fully charged** at the beginning. During the first **1600 years** of human history men lived **930, 912, 905, 910, 895, 962, 969, 777, 950** years. Yet eventually the battery **wore down** and because it could **not be recharged**, it **died** and man ceased to function. Like the **Energizer Bunny**

Genesis 5:5, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 27, 30; 9:29: The formula: “**And he died**”

Romans 6:23

“For the wages of sin is death.” GOD WAS RIGHT!!

*“As Adam and Eve ate of this tree, they acknowledged their dependence upon God. The tree of life possessed the power to perpetuate life, and as long as they ate of it, they could not die. The lives of the **antediluvians** were **protracted** because of the **life-giving power of this tree**, which was transmitted to them from Adam and Eve.”* Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, volume 7, p. 988

Life Spans between the Flood and Abraham

According to **Genesis 11** the live span of those who lived between the flood and Abraham was greatly reduced: **600, 438, 433, 464, 239, 239, 230, 148, 205 and 175.**

Factors: Imperfect **body**, deteriorating **environment**, violation of the **laws of health**, no **tree of life**

The Days of Moses

Deuteronomy 34:7: Moses lived to be **120**

The Days of David

Psalms 90:10: Today our life span is seventy or eighty

“The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.”

Why no Death that very Day?

Genesis 2:17: that **very day**

“But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for **in the day** that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

Genesis 3:21: Jesus **offered His life that very day**

“Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.”

1 Peter 1:18-21

*“. . . knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. 20 He indeed was **foreordained before the foundation of the world**, but was manifest in these last times for you.”*

Revelation 13:8

*“All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb **slain from the foundation of the world**.”*

II Timothy 1:10: Jesus brought life and immortality **to light through the gospel** so we **must not be** immortal by nature but only Christ.

“. . . but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

Romans 2:6, 7 If man is immortal by nature, **why do we have to seek** what we already have?

“. . . who ‘will render to each one according to his deeds’: 7 eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality.”

We Still Die

But even those who have accepted Jesus **still die. Why?** Because we still **do not have access** to the tree of life and our **battery runs out**. But all this will change for those who have received Christ.

The Final Touch of Immortality

I Thessalonians 4:15-17: The key expression is **“in Christ.”**

*“For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And **the dead in Christ** will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be **caught up together** with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”*

I Corinthians 15:51-55: The **dead in Christ** will rise and the **living saints** will receive the **touch of immortality**. Immortality must be put on so we **must not have it**

“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’ 55 “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?”

I once was **talking with a friend** who believes that man is by nature immortal. I asked him. Do you believe that man is **omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent?** Then why should be immortal. Immortality is an **incommunicable** attribute of God

1 Timothy 6:13-16

*“I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, 14 that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, 15 which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 **who alone has immortality**, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.”*

Restoration to the Tree of Life (restored to the charger)

Revelation 21:4

“And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

Isaiah 66:22, 23

“For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me,” says the LORD, “So shall your descendants and your name remain. 23 And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the LORD.”

Revelation 22:1, 2

*“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the **tree of life**, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit **every month**. The **leaves** of the tree were for the **healing** of the nations.”*

Revelation 2:7

*“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give **to eat from the tree of life**, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.”*

Revelation 22:14, 15 Notice the conditions to be **inside** and **outside**

*“Blessed are those who **do His commandments** that they may have the **right to the tree of life**, and may enter through the gates into the city. 15 But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.”*

Must Receive Jesus Now

John 3:16: Explain. Not eternal life in **bliss** or eternal life in **misery** but rather **DEATH!!**

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Galatians 3:26, 27: How we become in Christ

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

I John 5:11, 12

“And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

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#2 - A Thief and a Witch

Luke 23:32, 33: Two malefactors crucified with Jesus.

“There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. 33 And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left.”

Luke 23:39-43: Words of the Repentant Thief

“Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, “If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.” 40 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, “Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.” 42 Then he said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” 43 And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”

The original New Testament manuscripts had no punctuation marks. Where do we place the comma in Luke 23:43?

Two Possibilities

- *“Verily I say unto **thee**, today you will be with me in paradise.”*
- *“Verily I say unto thee **today**, you will be with me in paradise.”*

Where is Paradise located?

II Corinthians 12:2-4

*“I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago--whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know [in person or in vision], God knows--such a one **was caught up to***

*the third heaven. 3 And I know such a man--whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows-- 4 how he was **caught up into Paradise** and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."*

Genesis 1:8: The Location of the first heaven (the atmospheric heaven):

"And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day."

Genesis 15:5: The location of the second heaven (the starry heaven):

"Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

The third heaven is the place where **God dwells beyond the sun, moon and stars**. Let's take a look at the Biblical evidence for this.

Revelation 2:7: Paradise is where **the tree of life is**

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

Revelation 22:1, 2: The tree of life is where the **throne of God** is in the **New Jerusalem**.

"And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

Revelation 22:14: The tree of life is **inside the gates in the New Jerusalem**.

"Blessed are those who do His commandments that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city."

The **Jews** during the **Inter-Testamental** period had developed an **extra-biblical tradition** that paradise was an **intermediary place** where the souls of the righteous went before they entered into the **presence of God**. Many **Protestants** today pick up on this and say that paradise was a **temporary holding house for the souls of the righteous Old Testament** saints until Jesus died on the cross.

However, the inevitable conclusion is that paradise is located in the **New Jerusalem** on the **banks of the River of Life** which flows directly from the **throne of God**.

If Jesus had meant to say that He and the thief would go to paradise that very day, then they must have gone **to the presence of God in heaven itself**.

Acts 2:25-27: Where did Jesus actually go the day of His crucifixion? It is clear that He actually stayed in the grave until the resurrection

*"For David says concerning **Him**: 'I foresaw the LORD always before my face, for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. 26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad;*

moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. 27 For You will not leave **my soul** in Hades, nor will You allow **Your Holy One** to see corruption.” Notice here that the soul is equivalent to the Holy One in the synonymous parallelism.

The New International Version of Acts 2:27:

*“Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; **my body** also will live in hope, because you will not abandon **me** to the **grave**, nor will you let your **Holy One** see **decay**.”*

Significantly, The KJV translates the word *hades* in **I Corinthians 15:55** with the word “grave”. The word *hades* is equivalent to the Hebrew word *sheol* and means, “the grave.” More on this in a upcoming lecture.

John 19:31-34: Did the Thief die that very day?

*“Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their **legs might be broken**, and that they might be **taken away**. 32 Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. 33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.”*

According to **John 19:33** the two thieves were not dead when they were removed from their crosses

Matthew 27:46-50: At what hour did Jesus die?

*“And about the **ninth hour [three o’clock in the afternoon]** Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” 47 Some of those who stood there, when they heard that, said, “This Man is calling for Elijah!” 48 Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink. 49 The rest said, “Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him.” 50 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and **yielded up His spirit**.”*

Luke 23:42: The Thief’s Request to Jesus.

*“Then he said to Jesus: Lord, remember me **when you come into your kingdom**.”*

Did Jesus come into His **kingdom on that very day**? How could Jesus come into His kingdom if He had not broken the **fetters of the tomb**? Jesus did not enter into His kingdom until **He sat with His Father** on His throne upon the ascension.

John 20:1: When did Jesus resurrect from the dead?

*“On the **first day** of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.”*

Jesus died on the **sixth day**. He resurrected on the **first day**.

John 20:17, KJV: Later on the first day Jesus had **not yet ascended to His Father**.

“Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.”

Luke 24:39: Jesus could be touched in the evening.

“Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.”

Three Hebrew Feasts

- Passover (I Corinthians 5:7)
- Unleavened Bread (I Corinthians 5:8)
- First Fruits (I Corinthians 15:20)

Deuteronomy 30:18:

*“I announce to you **today** that **you shall** surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess.”*

The Witch of Endor

Saul spent most of his time **persecuting David** and totally ignored the **administration** of the kingdom. The Philistines took advantage of this and gained huge **military advantage** over Israel. Saul was **losing the kingdom** and he was **desperate**. This explains his reaction in I Samuel 28:5.

I Samuel 28:5:

*“When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was **afraid**, and his heart **trembled greatly**.”*

I Samuel 28:6: God had established certain **conventional methods**, to answer Israel’s requests but now Saul **used these methods** but God did not answer!

*“And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD **did not answer him**, either by **dreams** or by **Urim** or by the **prophets**.”*

I Samuel 28:3:

*“Now Samuel had **died**, and all Israel had lamented for him and **buried** him in Ramah, in his own city. And Saul had put the mediums and the spiritists out of the land.”*

Ecclesiastes 9:5

*“For the living know that they will die; but the dead know **nothing**, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten.”*

Leviticus 20:27: Does God go **against His own established methods**? Would Samuel, who had obeyed God in life, now **disobey Him in death**?

*'A man or a woman who is a medium, or who has familiar spirits, shall surely be **put to death**; they shall **stone them with stones**. Their blood shall be upon them.'* "

Leviticus 19:31:

*“Give **no regard** to mediums and familiar spirits; **do not seek after them**, to be **defiled** by them: I am the LORD your God.”*

I Samuel 28:9: **Saul had destroyed** all the mediums from the land. **He knew** that what he was doing was **wrong**.

“Then the woman said to him, "Look, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the spiritists from the land. Why then do you lay a snare for my life, to cause me to die?"

I Samuel 28:7, 8: **Saul knew** that what he was doing was wrong!

*“Then Saul said to his servants, "Find me a woman who is a medium that I may go to her and inquire of her." And his servants said to him, "In fact, there is a woman who is a medium at Endor." 8 So Saul **disguised himself** and put on **other clothes**, and he went, and two men with him; and they came to the woman **by night**. And he said, "Please conduct a seance for me, and bring up for me the one I shall name to you."*

I Samuel 28:11:

*“Then said the woman, ‘Whom shall I **bring up** unto thee?’ And he said, ‘**Bring me up Samuel**.’”*

1 Samuel 28:13

*“And the king said to her, "Do not be afraid. What did you see?" And the woman said to Saul, "I saw a spirit [KJV: ‘gods’: **elohim**] **ascending** out of the earth."*

Genesis 3:4, 5:

*“Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and **you will be like God**, knowing good and evil."*

1 Samuel 28:14 (remember when Cornelius bowed before Peter?)

*“So he said to her, "What is his form?" And she said, "An old man is **coming up**, and he is **covered with a mantle**." And Saul **perceived** that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his **face to the ground and bowed down**.”*

1 Samuel 28:19

*“Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And **tomorrow** you and your sons **will be with me**. The LORD will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.”*

Hebrews 11:32: Samuel is on the honor roll of the saved.

*“And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and **Samuel** and the prophets. . .”*

Hebrews 11:35: Samuel looked forward to a better resurrection.

*“Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a **better resurrection**.”*

I Chronicles 10:13, 14:

*“So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the LORD, because he did not keep the word of the LORD, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance. 14 But he **did not inquire of the LORD**; therefore He killed him, and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.”*

Isaiah 8:19, 20:

*“And when they say to you, “Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,” should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? 20 **To the law and to the testimony!** If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”*

I Samuel 28:14:

*“...And Saul **perceived** that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his.”*

I Samuel 16:14: Saul’s powers of perception were skewed.

*“But the Spirit of the LORD **departed** from Saul, and an **evil spirit** from the LORD troubled him.”*

Who is was this evil spirit from the Lord? Does the Lord **send evil spirits** to people using **methods He has forbidden while he bypasses the methods he has condoned**? Absolutely not! But God **allows Satan** to do it. Was Samuel evil? **I Chronicles 18:18-20** has the explanation as well as the book of **Job**

*“When Saul inquired for Samuel, the Lord did not cause Samuel to appear to Saul. He saw nothing. Satan was not allowed to disturb the rest of Samuel in the grave, and bring him up in reality to the witch of Endor. God does not give Satan power to resurrect the dead. But Satan’s angels assume the **form of dead friends**, and **speak and act like them**, that through professed dead friends he can the better carry on his work of **deception**. Satan **knew Samuel well**, and he*

knew how to represent him before the witch of Endor, and to utter correctly the fate of Saul and his sons.” Conflict and Courage, p. 172

A striking quotation from the pen of **Ellen G. White**:

“He has power to bring before men the **appearance** of their departed friends. The **counterfeit is perfect**; the familiar look, the words, the tone are reproduced with **marvelous distinctness**. Many are comforted with the assurance that their loved ones are **enjoying the bliss of heaven**, and without suspicion of danger, they give ear “to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.” The Great Controversy, p. 552.

Why does Satan lead people to consult the dead?

“Satan leads men to consult those that have familiar spirits; and by revealing **hidden things of the past** [Satan knows the past of everyone to the minutest detail, even the secret things], he inspires confidence in his power to foretell **things to come**. By **experience** gained through the long ages he can reason from **cause to effect** and often forecast with a degree of accuracy, some of the future events of man's life. Thus he is **enabled to deceive** poor, misguided souls and bring them under his power and lead them captive at his will.” Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 687.

Please note that **Satan** is also **able to predict what he intends to do** to someone in the future. Like with **Jeanne Dixon** who predicted the death of **Robert F. Kennedy**

Satan now uses **angels, channelers, astrologers, crystal ball gazers, palm readers, psychics, Mary and the saints**, etc., because these methods are **entirely under his control**. Our only safety is to trust in the **Bible** and the Bible only!!

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#3 - The Rich Man and Lazarus

Luke 16:1. This opening formula ‘there was a certain...’ was Christ’s way of introducing a parable (see also, Luke 15:11; 7:41; 19:2; 20:9).

*“He also said to His disciples: **“There was a certain** rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods.”*

Jesus frequently used the parables of His day and gave them an **unexpected twist**. This parable was actually **well known** in Christ’s day and Jesus employed it to teach a great truth. Some Bible expositors affirm that this **cannot be a parable** because Jesus uses the **proper name of Lazarus** and parables never use proper names—the actors are always **anonymous**. Later we shall discover that Jesus had a **very good reason** for using the proper name of Lazarus.

Luke 16:14. Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees:

“Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him.”

Scholars agree that the Gospel of **Luke was written for the Greeks**. This being the case, we can understand **why** Jesus would use this parable. But Jesus was also addressing the **Pharisees**. If He had been addressing the **Sadducees** He would never have used this parable.

Flavius Josephus (who was a **Pharisee** himself, born in the **year 37**) **on the anthropology of the Pharisees:**

*“They [the Pharisees] say that **all souls are incorruptible** but that the souls of good men only are removed into other bodies,—but that the souls of bad men are subject to eternal punishment. But the Sadducees. . . take away the belief of the **immortal duration of the soul**, and the punishments and rewards in Hades.”* *Flavius Josephus, Wars of the Jews, II.14*

Acts 23:8: There is **Bible confirmation** of the beliefs of the **Pharisees and Sadducees on death and the afterlife**.

“For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.”

Ellen White concurs with the Bible and Josephus:

*“In this parable Christ was meeting the people **on their own ground**. The doctrine of a **conscious state of existence** between death and the resurrection was **held by many** of those who were listening to Christ's words. The Savior knew of their ideas, and He **framed His parable** so as to inculcate important truths through these preconceived opinions.” Christ's Object Lessons, p. 263*

Mark 6:49: The disciples of Jesus had imbibed these erroneous views.

“But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out.”

Flavius Josephus wrote a work called *“Discourse to the Greeks Concerning Hades”* In the work Josephus explains that *hades* was a **subterranean region** which has **two compartments**. One compartment or region contained a lake of unquenchable **everlasting fire** and the other was called the **“Bosom of Abraham”**.

According to this view when the wicked and the righteous died, they were taken down a descent where there was a gate guarded by an archangel accompanied by a host of angels. At the gate the **wicked** were taken by the **angels** to the compartment which was located on the **left side**. There was the lake of unquenchable fire where they were to suffer **everlasting punishment**. The **righteous**, on the other hand, were guided by **angels** to the compartment on the **right side** where the **Bosom of Abraham** was located. **Between** the two regions there was a **great gulf** which did not allow the righteous to pass to the region of the wicked or the wicked to the region of the righteous. It is obvious that Jesus is **picking up on the theology** of the Pharisees.

According to Jesus, **where are the dead truly retained until the resurrection?** This text clearly reveals **where the righteous are retained** until the resurrection: In their **graves**. If the righteous are in **heaven or in hell**, **why does Jesus call them forth from the grave?**

John 5:28, 29:

*“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are **in the graves** will hear His voice 29 and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.”*

In Holy Scripture, the wicked always suffer the **punishment of fire** at the **end of the age**, **never at the moment of death**. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus appears to be the **lone exception**.

Does Jesus contradict what he teaches elsewhere in the New Testament? **Notice the following examples**. There are others as well: **Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 20:7-10; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; II Peter 3:1-13; II Thessalonians 2:8.**

Matthew 13:40-43:

*“As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the **end of this world**. 41 The Son of man shall **send forth his angels, and they shall gather [notice when the angels gather the wicked—not at death but at the end of the world]** out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity 42 and shall **cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth [like the rich man]**. 43 **Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father**”*

*“Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the **end of this age**. 41 The Son of Man will **send out His angels, and they will gather [notice that the angels do not gather the wicked at death but rather at the end of the age]** out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, 42 and will **cast them into the furnace of fire**. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth [like the rich man]. 43 **Then [not at death] the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!***

Josephus said the righteous and wicked were **gathered by the angels** at the **moment of death**. Jesus said it happens at the **end of the age**. **Then** will be the **wailing and gnashing of teeth**, not the moment of death.

Matthew 25:31-34, 41, 46:

*"When the Son of Man **comes in His glory**, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will **separate them** one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. 33 And He will set the sheep on His **right** hand, but the goats on the **left**. 34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 41 "Then He will also say to those on the **left** hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the **everlasting fire** prepared for the devil and his angels. 46 "And these will go away into **everlasting punishment [we will discuss this in a later lecture]**, but the righteous into **eternal life**."*

Remember that **Josephus** spoke about the **dead being taken to the right or left side at the moment of death** rather than at the end of the age.

Revelation 21:8:

*“But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars **shall have** their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the **second death**.”*

Clearly here the wicked are cast into the fire, **not at the moment of their first death** but at the moment of their **second death**.

Revelation 20:11-15 speaks about the wicked who resurrect after the thousand years. Notice that they are **judged** and **then cast** into the fire. If they were cast into the fire when they died, then they were **punished without due process**. God does not operate like this.

Matthew 24:31: Are the righteous actually carried to **Abraham's Bosom by the angels at the moment of death?** Matthew 24:31 (as well as I Thessalonians 4:15-5:1; John 14:1-3) say that they are taken by the **angels to Jesus at the second coming.**

"And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

If God **forbade communication** between the dead and the living, why does the rich man ask God to **send Lazarus** to his five living brothers?

Leviticus 20:27:

"A man or a woman who is a medium, or who has familiar spirits, shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones. Their blood shall be upon them."

Ecclesiastes 9:5: The dead are actually dead.

"For the living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten."

Genesis 3:19: At the **moment of death** man goes **to the grave** and **becomes dust**. All of the **body parts remain in the grave**. I have done **dozens of funerals** and can vouch for this fact!!

"In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return."

Luke 16:22: Lazarus **died** and was **buried**

"So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried."

We are explicitly told that the rich man died and was **buried**. It is obvious that his **body was in the grave**. This being the case: What were the rich man and Lazarus doing in hell with their body parts? Notice the following texts:

Luke 16:23:

*"And being in torments in **Hades** [we will study this word in another lecture], he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom."*

Luke 16:24:

*"Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his **finger** in water and cool my **tongue**; for I am tormented in this flame.'"*

If the body parts are in hell then this must **not have happened at death** but rather at the **end of the age**. Notice that the story never says that the rich man and Lazarus were taken **immediately** upon the **moment of death**.

Matthew 5:29, 30: **Body parts** are spoken of being in **hell only** at the **end of the age**.

“If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish than for your whole body to be cast into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish than for your whole body to be cast into hell.”

The fact is that if both the rich man and Lazarus have body parts in hell. If the body is not cast into the fire until the end of the age, then this story **must be describing something which will happen at the end of the age** and not something which happened at death.

This is why **Robert Morey**, a **staunch believer and defender** of the immortality of the soul, is forced to admit:

*“Everyone understood that these parables and dialogues **did not literally take place**. It was understood that the rabbis used **imaginative stories** and dialogues as a teaching method. It was understood by all that these dialogues **never took place**. . . He [Jesus] was merely using the dialogue method to get across the concept that there is no escape from torment, no second chance, and we must believe the Scripture in this life unto salvation.” Robert Morey, Death and the Afterlife, p. 85.*

What a candid admission. The **only story** in the Bible which appears to **teach conscious torment** in the flames of hell **at the very moment of death, never actually took place!!**

John 1:18: The bosom represents closeness and intimacy. The **rich man** claims an **intimate closeness to Abraham**. In fact, all his **hopes are centered in Abraham, not in God**.

“No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.”

Whom does the rich man represent?

- The rich man represents the **Jewish nation**, more specifically, the **Pharisees**.
- They claimed to be **sons of their father**, Abraham. The rich man had **five brothers**: The **Scribes**, the **Sadducees**, the **Herodians**, the **Zealots** and the **Essenes** (verse 31).
- These brothers **had Moses and the prophets** (John 5:45-46). It is also obvious that the rich man **believed in the immortality of the soul** as we shall momentarily see.

Luke 16:24, 25, 27-30: The rich man represents the Pharisees

*“Then he cried and said, '**Father Abraham**, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' 25 But Abraham said, '**Son**, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. 27 Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, **father**, that you would send him to **my father's house**, 28 for I have five brothers that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' 29 Abraham said to him, 'They have **Moses and the prophets**; let them hear them.' 30 And he said, 'No, **father Abraham**; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'”*

John 8:39:

“They answered and said to Him, ‘Abraham is our father.’”

Luke 16:30:

*“And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to **them from the dead**, they will repent.'”*

Abraham believed in the resurrection of the dead. Luke 16:31:

*“And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'” But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one **rise from the dead**.' ”*

Luke 24:46:

*“Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to **rise from the dead** the third day.”*

Who is represented by the poor beggar Lazarus?

Matthew 15:26, 27:

*“But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little **dogs**." 27 And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little **dogs** eat the **crumbs** which fall from their **masters' table**.”*

Luke 16:22-25: This passage is read in the following way by those who believe in the immortality of the soul:

*“So it was that the beggar died and [**immediately?**] was [**his soul?**] carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and [**his body?**] was buried. 23 And being in torments in [**the everlasting flames of?**] Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw [**the soul of?**] Abraham afar off, and [**the soul of?**] Lazarus in his bosom. 24 Then [**his soul?**] he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on [**my soul?**] me, and send [**the soul of?**] Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for [**my soul?**] I am tormented in this [**everlasting?**] flame.' 25 But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now [**his soul?**] he is comforted and [**your soul?**] you are tormented.”*

There is a very real danger of **adding to the story** our preconceived assumptions that are not in the text.

Why did Jesus use a proper name in this parable?

Let's read **Luke 16:31:** We are now ready to understand why Jesus used the proper name of Lazarus in this story.

*“But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though **one rise from the dead.**' ”*

A man named Lazarus resurrected a short time after Jesus told this story. **John 11:43, 44**

“Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" 44 And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."

John 11:46-50: How did the **Pharisees react** to the story of the **resurrection of Lazarus? Did they believe in Jesus?**

*“But some of them went away to the **Pharisees** and told them the things Jesus did. 47 Then the chief priests and the **Pharisees** gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. 48 If we let Him alone like this, everyone will **believe in Him**, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation." 49 And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, 50 nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that **one man should die** for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish."*

John 12:9-11

“Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. 10 But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, 11 because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.”

John 12:19

*“The **Pharisees** therefore said among themselves: "You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!"*

John 8:44:

“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.”

Matthew 23:33: Woes on the scribes and **Pharisees**

“Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?”

Matthew 8:11, 12: This is at the **end of the age.**

*“And I say to you that many **will** come from east and west, and sit down with **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.** 12 But the **sons of the kingdom** will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth.**”*

Luke 13:28

*“There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see **Abraham** and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets **in the kingdom of God**, and yourselves thrust out.”*

Matthew 22:7:

“But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.”

MISUNDERSTOOD TEXTS ON THE STATE OF THE DEAD By Stephen Bohr

#4 - Paul's Dilemma: Stay or Depart?

Introduction

Philippians 1:21-24:

*“For to me, to **live** is Christ, and to **die** is gain. 22 But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is **far better**. 24 Nevertheless to **remain in the flesh** is more needful for you.”*

This is interpreted to mean that Paul **wanted to die** and **immediately** be in the presence of the Lord.

Historical Context

Philippians was written during **Paul's first imprisonment in Rome**. At this point he is **not sure** what is going to happen to him. Is he going to **die** or is he going to be **released and live**?

Proof that he wrote this book while he was in **prison** in Rome:

Philippians 1:7, 13, 14:

*“. . . just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in **my chains** and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace. 13 so that it has become evident to the whole **palace guard**, and to all the rest, that **my chains** are in Christ; 14 and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by **my chains**, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.”*

Paul's Earnest Expectation and Hope

Philippians 1:20:

“. . . according to my **earnest expectation** [apokaradokia] and **hope** that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be **magnified in my body**, whether by **life** or by **death**.”

Romans 8:19-23: What was Paul’s earnest expectation and hope?

“For the **earnest expectation** [apokaradokia: eager anticipation] of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in **hope**; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only that, but we also who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even **we ourselves groan** within ourselves, **eagerly waiting** for the adoption, the **redemption of our body**.”

Desire to Glorify God

Notice that by **life in the body** or by **death of the body**, Paul wanted God to be glorified. He would glorify God by **life in the body** because he would **preach the gospel** and many souls would be converted to the truth. **In what sense would he glorify God by the death of the body? By the death of a martyr**

John 21:18, 19:

“Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.” 19 This He spoke, signifying by what death he would **glorify God**. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, “Follow Me.”

Acts 7:59, 60:

“And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” 60 Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”

Saul of Tarsus himself was won to a great degree by the **constancy and serenity** of Stephen as he was being stoned to death! The death of Stephen **saved souls!**

To die is Gain

Philippians 1:21:

“For to me to **live** is Christ and to **die** is gain.”

Paul was **not afraid of dying**. In what sense did he consider death an advantage?

Revelation 14:13 explains that those who die in the Lord “*rest from their labors*”:

"Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, 'Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' " "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."

II Corinthians 11:23-28:

*"Are they ministers of Christ?--I speak as a fool--I am more: in labors more abundant, in **stripes** above measure, in **prisons** more frequently, in **deaths** often. 24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness-- 28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches."*

To Live in the Flesh

Philippians 1:22:

*"But if I live on **in the flesh**, this will mean **fruit** from my labor. . ."*

Does Paul mean that after he dies, he **will not have flesh** but rather will be an intangible spirit?

I Corinthians 15:50:

*"Now this I say, brethren, that **flesh and blood** cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does **corruption inherit incorruption.**"*

The succeeding verses (51-55) amplify that flesh and blood and corruption refer to the body in its **present sinful state**. In heaven we will have a **spiritual body** not infected by corruption and mortality.

*"Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this **corruptible** must put on **incorruption**, and this **mortal** must put on **immortality**. 54 So when this **corruptible** has put on **incorruption**, and this **mortal** has put on **immortality**, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"*

Hebrews 5:7

*". . . who, in the **days of His flesh**, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear. . ."*

Hebrews 2:14

*“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of **flesh and blood**, He Himself likewise shared in **the same**, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.”*

Luke 24:39:

*“Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have **flesh and bones** as you see I have.””*

I Corinthians 15:42-44:

“So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.”

Ellen G. White on the spiritual body:

“Paul illustrates this subject by the kernel of grain sown in the field. The planted kernel decays, but there comes forth a new kernel. The natural substance in the grain that decays is never raised as before, but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him. A much finer material will compose the human body, for it is a new creation, a new birth. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.” Ellen G. White, Maranatha, p. 301.

The Fruit of Paul’s Labor

Colossians 1:5, 6: What will be the fruit of Paul’s labor if he chooses to live in the flesh?

“. . . because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, 6 which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth.”

John 12:24:

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain [karpos: fruit].”

Paul is between a **rock and a hard place**. Up till this point, **Paul is** confronted with **two options: To live in the flesh or to die**.

Paul’s Third Option

Philippians 1:22, 23:

*“. . . yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 For I am hard pressed [I am torn] between the two [dying or staying], having a desire to depart [the moment I die?] and be with Chris [a third option]t, which is **far better**.”*

A **third and better option** than **living in the flesh or dying: Departing to be with Christ.**

He does **not say**: “I wish my **soul would depart** from my body to be with **Christ immediately** at the **very moment** of my death.”

When did he expect to be with Jesus

Philippians 3:10, 11:

“. . . that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death. 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”

When did the apostle Paul expect to depart to be with Christ? Let’s allow him to tell us.

I Thessalonians 4:13, 14:

*“But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus **died and rose again**, even so **God** [the Father] will bring [to heaven] with Him [Jesus] those who sleep in Jesus.*

Do you mean to say that God the Father will **not come with Jesus at the second coming**?

John 8:29: The **Father** did not come with Jesus at His first coming. The Father stayed in heaven and **sent Jesus**.

*“And He who **sent Me** is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.”*

John 16:28

*“I **came forth** from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and **go to the Father**.”*

Jesus **died and resurrected** and **caught up** to His Father’s throne

Revelation 12:5

*“She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was **caught up to God** and His throne.”*

Acts 3:19-20: The **Father** once again will **send Jesus**

*“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, 20 and that **He may send Jesus Christ**, who was preached to you before.”*

What about the text that says that Jesus will come in the **glory of His Father**? **Hebrews 1:3** says that Jesus is the brightness of the Father’s glory and the **express image** of His person.”

The experience of Jesus:

- Jesus died
- Jesus resurrected
- Jesus ascended to His Father's house

The experience of the righteous:

- The righteous **died (slept)**
- The righteous **resurrected**
- The righteous are **brought** with Jesus to the **Father's house**

I Thessalonians 4:15-17:

*“For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by **no means precede** those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will **descend** from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be **caught up together with them** in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”*

Notice the sequence: Those in Christ slept, resurrected and were caught up with Jesus to the Father.

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 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. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”

Paul's view is crystal clear: The righteous dead and the righteous living go to **heaven at the same time**—at the **second coming!**

Paul's Uniform Perspective:

- **II Corinthians 5: Alive, naked, translated**
- **I Thessalonians 4: Alive, asleep, translated**
- **Philippians 1: Alive, dead, translated**

Paul's Hope

II Timothy 4:6-8:

*“For I am already being poured out as a **drink offering**, and the time of my **departure [where to?]** is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is **laid up for me** the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me **on that Day**, and not to me only but also to all who have loved **His appearing**.”*

Paul wrote II Timothy during his **second imprisonment** in **Rome**. He is now **certain that he is going to be martyred**. But he is equally sure that Jesus will give him a crown when He comes to **resurrect him**.

I John 3:2:

“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

Philippians 1:24:

*“Nevertheless to **remain in the flesh** is more needful for you.”*

MISUNDERSTOOD TEXTS ON THE STATE OF THE DEAD

By Stephen Bohr

#5 – Absent from the Body & Present with the Lord

The apostle Paul wrote some things which are difficult to understand

II Peter 3:15, 16:

“. . . and account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation--as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.”

Paul here contrasts now and later (time), here and there

II Corinthians 4:16-18:

*“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our **outward** man is perishing, yet the **inward** man is being renewed day by day. 17 For our **light affliction**, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more **exceeding and eternal weight of glory**, 18 while we do not look at the things which are **seen**, but at the things which are **not seen**. For the things which are seen are **temporary**, but the things which are not seen are **eternal**.”*

The earthly tent and the heavenly building

II Corinthians 5:1:

*“For we know that if our **earthly** house, this **tent**, is **destroyed** [**dissolved, disintegrated**], we **have a building** from God, a **house not made with hands**, eternal in the **heavens**.”*

Important Terminology:

- *Skene* (“tabernacle”) = Transitory tent made with hands, easily dissolved on earth
- *Oikoterion* = We have a permanent and incorruptible building not made with hands in heaven
- **Contrast: Earthly** house, tent, dissolved **vs. heavenly**, building, eternal

An Important Fact:

We **already have** the building in heaven **while we still live in the tent** on earth. Israel camped in tents during her pilgrimage across the desert. When they entered the Promised Land they built permanent buildings. While we are strangers and pilgrims on earth we live in our **bodily tent** but when Jesus comes we will receive our **permanent building**.

What is the earthly tent?

Job 4:19: Our present house of clay is **fragile** and **breakable**.

*“How much more those who dwell in **houses of clay** whose foundation is in the **dust**, who are crushed before a moth?”*

Job 10:9:

*“Remember, I pray, that You have made me like **clay**. And will You turn me into **dust** again?”*

Peter and the earthly tent

II Peter 1:13-15:

*“Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in **this tent**, to stir you up by reminding you, 14 knowing that shortly I must **put off my tent** [key question: **When will he put on his building which God has in store in heaven?**], just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. 15 Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease [Luke 9:31: Exodus or departure].*

The expression “made without hands”

Mark 14:58:

*“We heard Him say, ‘I will destroy this temple that is **made with hands**, and within three days I will build another **made without hands**.’ [John 2:19-21 says that the temple was the body of Jesus] ”*

Hebrews 9:11:

*“But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle **not made with hands**, that is, **not of this creation**.”*

Jesus had a **real body after His resurrection** but it was an **incorruptible, immortal, glorified** body. It was not the result of **human procreation** but of a **supernatural miracle** of God who made His resurrection body.

Luke 24:39-43:

*“Behold My **hands** and My **feet**, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have **flesh and bones** as you see I have.” 40 When He had said this, He showed them His **hands and His feet**. 41 But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, “Have you any food here?” 42 So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. 43 And He took it and **ate in their presence**.”*

Paul’s groaning for his house from heaven

II Corinthians 5:2:

*“For in this we **groan**, earnestly desiring to be **clothed** with our **habitation** [house] which is **from heaven**.”*

Romans 8:23:

*“Not only that, but we also who have the **first fruits** of the Spirit, even we ourselves **groan** within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the **redemption of our body**.”*

A third Option now Introduced: Being Unclothed

II Corinthians 5:2, 3: Paul does **not want to be unclothed** without being further clothed upon.

*“For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be **clothed** with our habitation which is from heaven, 3 if indeed, having been **clothed**, we shall not be found **naked**.”*

Three Possible Options

- Living in the **present tabernacle (clothed)**
- Being **clothed upon with the heavenly building**
- Being is a state of **nakedness (unclothed)**

The link between II Corinthians 5 and I Corinthians 15:50-55

II Corinthians 5:4:

*“For we who are in this tent [1] **groan**, being **burdened**, not because we want to be **unclothed**, but [2] **further clothed**, that [3] **mortality** may be [4] **swallowed up** by life.”*

Key Expressions in Verse 4:

- “groan”
- “mortal”
- ‘clothed upon’

- “swallowed up”

I Corinthians 15:50-55:

*“Now this I say, brethren, that **flesh and blood** cannot inherit the **kingdom of God**; nor does **corruption** inherit **incorruption**. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must **put on** incorruption, and this **mortal** must **put on** immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has **put on** incorruption, and this mortal has **put on** immortality then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is **swallowed up** in victory.” 55 “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?”*

Does this happen at death or at the second coming?

Philippians 3:20, 21:

*“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also **eagerly wait** for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our **lowly body** that it may be conformed to His **glorious body**, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”*

The **down payment** guarantees that we will receive the heavenly building. **Jesus** is the **first-fruits** and the **Holy Spirit** is the **guarantee**

II Corinthians 5:5: He has given us the Holy Spirit now as a guarantee that some day we **will receive our heavenly building**.

*“Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a **guarantee**. [earnest, security deposit, down payment]”*

II Corinthians 1:21, 22:

*“Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, 22 who also has **sealed us** and given us the **Spirit** in our hearts as a **guarantee**.”*

Ephesians 1:13, 14

*“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were **sealed** with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the **guarantee of our inheritance** until the **redemption** of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”*

I Corinthians 15:17-23:

*“And if **Christ is not risen** your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! 18 Then also **those who have fallen asleep in Christ** have perished. 19 If in **this life** only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. 20 But now Christ is risen from the dead and has become the **first fruits** of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 23*

But each one in his own order: Christ the first fruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. "

Romans 8:11:

"But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."

At home in the body and absent from the Lord

II Corinthians 5:6, 7:

"So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body [while we live in this present, weak, temporal, corruptible tent] we are absent from the Lord [because we don't have our future, heavenly, incorruptible, immortal building]. 7 For we walk by faith, not by sight."

Here we **walk by faith** because we are **absent** from the Lord. There we will walk by **sight** because we shall be **present with the Lord**.

Hebrews 11:1:

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Romans 8:24:

"For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?"

Paul **desired** to be **absent** from the body and **present** with the Lord but he did **not want** to be **unclothed**

II Corinthians 5:8:

"We are confident, yes, well pleased rather [that our immortal soul?] to be absent from the body [immediately after death?] and to be present [immediately after death] with the Lord."

When did Paul expect to be present with the Lord?

I Thessalonians 4:15-18:

"For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words."

Paul's Three Options:

- The living are **now present in the body [the tent] and absent from the Lord**
- The **dead in Christ are naked or asleep [no tent or building]**
- **When Jesus comes**, both groups will be absent from the body [**tent**] and present with the Lord [in the **building**]

The critical issue is to be accepted of Jesus

II Corinthians 5:9:

*"Therefore we make it **our aim**, whether present or absent, to be well **pleasing** to Him."*

In **Paul's writings** the **judgment** was always in the **future** on a certain day. The judgment does not take place at the **moment of death**

II Corinthians 5:10:

*"For we **must all appear** before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done **in the body [the tent]**, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."*

Acts 17:30, 31:

*"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed **a day** on which **He will judge the world** in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."*

We can have the assurance of life even now

John 5:24:

*"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me **has everlasting life**, and shall not come into judgment, but **has passed** from death into life. "*

John 6:40:

*"And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may **have everlasting life**; and I will raise him up at **the last day**."*

I John 5:11, 12: But this eternal life is not in ourselves but in Jesus

*"And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is **in His Son**. 12 He who **has the Son** has life; he who **does not have the Son** of God does not have life."*

John 11:25, 26: Resurrection of Lazarus

*"Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he **shall live**. 26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall **never die**. Do you believe this?"*

MISUNDERSTOOD TEXTS ON THE STATE OF THE DEAD

By Stephen Bohr

#6 – Preaching to the Spirits in Prison

Introduction

1 Peter 3:18-22

*“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to **death in the flesh** but **made alive by the Spirit**, 19 by whom also He **went and preached** to the **spirits in prison**, 20 who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. 21 There is also an antitype which now saves us-- baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the **resurrection of Jesus Christ**, 22 who has **gone** into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been **made subject** to Him.”*

The apostles wrote for **church members**, not for **theologians**. The purpose of their epistles was **practical**. They wished to teach the church members how to have **assurance** in the Christian life in the midst of great **trials and suffering**.

1 Peter 1:1, 2:

*“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the **pilgrims of the Dispersion** in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.”*

A common misunderstanding of 1 Peter 3:18

*“While the **body of Jesus** was dead, **His soul went down to hell** and preached the **good news of salvation** to the **spirits of dead people** who disobeyed at the time of the flood in order to give them a **second chance** to be saved.”*

- There will be **no second chance: Hebrews 9:27**

*“And as it is appointed for men to **die once**, but after this the judgment.”*

- **The Bible says:** “**Today** is the day of salvation”
- If Jesus gave the **pre-flood race** a **second chance** to be saved, then **why not to everyone?**
- **The dead know nothing**

Ecclesiastes 9:5:

“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.”

- **The pre-flood race was irreversible.** Why should God give them another chance to be saved?
- **Genesis 6:5:**

“Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

The Structure of Verse 18

1 Peter 3:18:

*“For Christ also **suffered once for sins**, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being **put to death in the flesh** but made alive by the Spirit.”*

The structure of verse 18:

- Jesus **suffered once** for sins. . .
- that He might *bring us to God*
- Being **put to death** in the flesh
- but *made alive by [in] the Spirit*

Death in the Flesh alive in the Spirit

Hebrews 5:7:

*“. . . who, in the days of His flesh [**while He was in his mortal tent**], when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear.”*

John 5:21:

*“For as the Father raises the dead and **gives life** to them, even so the Son **gives life** to whom He will.”*

Romans 8:11: The Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead.

*“But if the **Spirit** of Him who **raised Jesus from the dead** dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also **give life** to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”*

Death in the flesh means that his **natural body** died. **Made alive in the Spirit** means that He received his heavenly **glorified body** by the work of the Holy Spirit.

I Corinthians 15:42-44:

*“So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a **natural body**, it is raised a **spiritual body**. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.”*

The Grammar of 3:19

1 Peter 3:19:

*“. . . by whom [**in which state**] also He went and preached to the spirits in prison.”*

The agreement of the noun and the relative pronoun:

- “in the flesh” (dative case) “*en sarki*”
- “in the Spirit” (dative case) “*en pneumatii*”
- “in which” (dative case) “*en ho*”

Where did Jesus Go?

1 Peter 3:19:

“He went. . .”

Where did Jesus go? Did he go **up** to heaven, **down** to hell? The text does **not say** what direction He went. Christians assume that He went down. The word “**went**” in the Greek can refer to going **up, down or horizontally**.

Where did Jesus go after His resurrection in the Spirit?

Acts 1:10:

*“And while they looked steadfastly toward **heaven** as He **went up** [*poreutheis*], behold, two men stood by them in white apparel.”*

1 Peter 3:21, 22:

*“. . . through the **resurrection** of Jesus Christ, 22 who has **gone** [*poreutheis*] into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.”*

What does Preach Mean?

The word “**preached**” can also be translated “**proclaimed,**” or “**announced.**” It means to “**make known by a herald**”

Revelation 5:2:

*“Then I saw a strong angel **proclaiming** with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?”*

Luke 8:39:

*“Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you.” And he went his way and **proclaimed** throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.”*

Who are the Spirits in Prison?

Luke 10:20:

*“Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the **spirits** are **subject** to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”*

Luke 11:24-26

*“When an unclean **spirit** goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ 25 And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order. 26 Then he goes and takes with him seven other **spirits** more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.”*

Mark 1:27

“Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.”

Revelation 20:1, 3:

*“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the **bottomless pit** and a great **chain** in his hand. 3 and he cast him [the devil] into the **bottomless pit** [abyss], and **shut him up**, and set a **seal on him**, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be **released** for a little while.”*

The word “**prison**” is used in **Revelation 20:7**

Jude 6:6

*“And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in **everlasting chains** under darkness for the judgment of the great day.”*

2 Peter 2:4:

*“For if God did not spare the **angels** who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into **chains [tartaros] of darkness**, to be reserved for judgment.”*

Jesus Proclaims His Victory

I Peter 3:22:

*“. . . who has **gone [poreutheis]** into heaven and is at the right hand of God, **angels and authorities and powers** having been made subject to Him.”*

Matthew 12:28-29: Jesus came to **bind Satan** and proclaim His **victory over them**

*“But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. 29 Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first **binds** the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.”*

John 12:31, 32:

*“Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be **cast out**. 32 And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself. ” This he said, signifying what death he should die.”*

Compare **Luke 10:18** where Jesus saw **Satan fall** like lightning from heaven. This fall was **not at the beginning** but rather at the **cross**.

Dramatize the last thee words of Jesus on the cross:

- *“My God, my God, why hast You forsaken me?”*
- *“It is finished.”*
- *“Into Your hands I commend my spirit.”*

This was the hour of the **powers of darkness (Luke 22:53)**. Satan seemed in control. Demons disguised as men were present throughout the trial and crucifixion of Jesus.

Then read the following quotation from Ellen G. White:

*“**Hosts of evil angels** were gathered about the place [the tomb of Jesus].” Then she describes how Gabriel descends to the tomb: “The earth trembles at his approach, the **hosts of darkness flee**, and as he rolls away the stone, heaven seems to come down to the earth. The soldiers see him removing the stone as he would a pebble, and hear him cry, Son of God, come forth; Thy Father calls Thee. They see Jesus come forth from the grave, and hear Him proclaim over the rent sepulcher, **“I am the resurrection, and the life.”**” The Desire of Ages, p. 780.*

Colossians 2:14, 15:

*“And you, being **dead** in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has **made alive together** with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the*

way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 Having **disarmed principalities** and **powers**, He made a **public spectacle** of them, **triumphing** over them in it [**His cross**].”

Romans 8:38, 39: Nothing will be able to **separate us** from Jesus

“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor **angels** nor **principalities** nor **powers**, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to **separate us** from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Ephesians 6:12:

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against **principalities**, against **powers**, against the **rulers** of the **darkness of this age**, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the **heavenly places**.”

Ephesians 4:8-10: Jesus descended and then ascended

“Therefore He says: “When He **ascended on high**, He led **captivity captive** [**Matthew 27:51-53**], and gave gifts to men.” 9(Now this, “He **ascended**”--what does it mean but that He also first descended into the **lower parts of the earth**? 10 He who **descended** is also the One who **ascended far above all the heavens**, that He might fill all things.)”

This same movement downward and then upward is found also in Philippians 2:6-11

In summary:

- Jesus was **baptized** in death
- Jesus **resurrected** from the dead
- Jesus **ascended** on high
- Jesus **proclaimed** His victory over Satan and his angels

Ephesians 2:4-6:

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were **dead** in trespasses, **made us alive** together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and **raised us up** together, and **made us sit** together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

Romans 6:3, 5:

“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into **His death**? 5 For if we have been united together in the **likeness of His death**, certainly we also shall be in the **likeness of His resurrection**.”

Peter’s Audience

The word “**for**” in **verse 18** connects with the previous context. What was the **problem Peter** was addressing?

The people to whom he wrote were **suffering reproach** because they had been **baptized and become Christians**. They were wondering whether it was **worthwhile** to be Christians.

Peter uses the story of **Noah as an example** to encourage them. He was **oppressed by his enemies** but passed **through the waters** and his enemies were **buried in them**. Furthermore, **Satan was bound** because all of his followers were buried in the waters and Noah and his family came forth on the **other side of the flood** on to a cleansed world.

Jesus went through the same experience. He was **oppressed by Satan and His enemies**. He **suffered in the flesh** and was **baptized into death**. But he **resurrected and ascended on high** **disarming** the very powers which had caused His grief. As he came forth from the grave and **ascended to heaven** He proclaimed His **victory** over these powers of evil while the **entire universe rejoiced**. Peter now says that when we are baptized **we share in Christ's victory** because God looks at us as being included in Him.

I Peter 3:13-17:

*"And who is he **who will harm you** if you become followers of what is good? 14 But even **if you should suffer for righteousness' sake**, you are blessed. "And **do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.**" 15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; 16 having a good conscience, that when **they defame you as evildoers**, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. 17 For it is better, if it is the will of God, **to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.**"*

I Peter 4:12, 13:

*"Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the **fiery trial** which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 **but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings**, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be **glad with exceeding joy.**"*

2 Timothy 2:11-12

*"For if we **died** with Him, we shall also **live** with Him. 12 If we **endure**, we shall also **reign** with Him."*

MISUNDERSTOOD TEXTS ON THE STATE OF THE DEAD

By Stephen Bohr

#7 – Rachel’s Departing Soul

Genesis 35:18:

*“And so it was, as her **soul** was **departing** (for she died) that she called his name Ben-Oni; but his father called him Benjamin.”*

The Creation of Man

Genesis 2:7:

*“And the LORD God **formed** man of the **dust** of the ground, and breathed into his **nostrils** the **breath of life** [neshamah]; and man became a **living being** [nephesh].*

- Man was not **given** a soul
- Man does not **have** a soul
- Man **is** a soul
- The soul is composed to **two elements**: Dust and the breath of life
- Man **could die** (Genesis 2:16, 17). Life could only be **sustained** or recharged at the tree of life. This means that man was **conditionally immortal**. When man sinned he was **barred** from the battery charger and **died** (Genesis 3:22-24).

The Dust of the Ground

The **physical organism** of man is composed of **dust or clay**.

Isaiah 64:8:

*“But now, O LORD, You are our Father; we are the **clay**, and You our **potter**; and all we are the work of Your hand.”*

What is the spirit?

Two practically **synonymous Hebrew words**: *Ruach* and *neshamah*. **Never once** are they used to describe something **immortal, conscious** or able to **function independently** of the body.

Explain that **Hebrew poetry** is based on the principle of **parallelism**. There are three types: Synonymous, antithetical and synthetic. The *ruach* and *neshamah* are the **vital force**, the **energizing force**, the **electrical current** which leads the **heart** to pump, the **lungs** to breathe, the **nervous system** to function, etc.

Job 33:4:

*“The **Spirit** [ruach] of God has **made me**, and the **breath** [neshamah] of the Almighty **gives me life.**”*

Job 27:3:

*“As long as my **breath** [neshamah] is **in me**, and the **breath** [ruach] of God **in my nostrils.**”*

Isaiah 42:5:

*“Thus says God the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, who gives **breath** [neshamah] to the **people** on it, and **spirit** [ruach] to **those who walk** on it.”*

Ecclesiastes 3:19-21: Animals and men

*“For what happens to the sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other. Surely, they all have one **breath** [neshamah]; man has no advantage over animals, for all is vanity. 20 All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust. 21 Who knows the **spirit** [ruach] of the **sons of men**, which goes upward, and the **spirit** [ruach] of the **animal**, which goes down to the earth?”*

Am I saying that man is on the **same level as animals**? In terms of what **keeps them alive**, yes! Allow me to **illustrate** what I mean. Does a **refrigerator use the same energy** source as a computer? Of course it does. Does this mean that the computer and the refrigerator are **identical**? As far as their **energy source** is concerned, the answer is yes. But with regards to the **function** for which they were created they are very different. One was created to fulfill the function of a refrigerator and the other was built to fulfill the function of a computer. Obviously, with regards to function, the **computer is far more sophisticated than the fridge**. The energy source merely makes it possible for the computer and the refrigerator to fulfill the **function for which they were created**. Yet neither one can function **without being connected** to the power source! They are dead [even today we say that the **phone line went dead!**] without being connected.

Let's take a look at a few **New Testament** texts that use the word “**spirit**”. The word *pneuma* is the **exact equivalent of ruach and neshamah**:

James 2:26:

“For as the body without the spirit [pneuma] is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”

Revelation 11:7, 11: Regarding the **two witnesses**

7 *“Now when they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and **kill** them. 11 Now after the three-and-a-half days the **breath** [pneuma] of life from God **entered them**, and **they stood** on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them.”*

Ezekiel 37: This is similar to the valley of the **dry bones**. There the **body parts** come together and then the **spirit** comes into them and they **stand up and live**.

John 19:30:

*“So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His **spirit** [pneuma].”*

He stopped breathing

What is the soul?

The word “soul” is a “**life**”, a “**living being**”, a “**person**”

Genesis 2:7:

*“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and **breathed** into his nostrils the **breath** [neshamah] of life; and man became a **living being** [nephesh].”*

Genesis 14:21: King of Sodom. You take the booty but give me the persons

*“Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the **persons** [nephesh], and take the goods for yourself.””*

Why does the **KJV** sometimes translate “**person**” and at other times “**soul**”? There is no explanation other than bias.

Genesis 12:5: Left **Haran** for **Canaan**

*“Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the **people** [nephesh; “**souls**” in the **KJV**] whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan.”*

Leviticus 17:11: The word can also be translated “**life**”

*“For the **life** [nephesh] of the flesh is in the blood and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your **souls** [“**you**” nephesh]; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the **soul** [“**the person**” nephesh].”*

The blood carries the **life giving oxygen** to all parts of the body. When the **vital force** leaves the body, the blood **does not flow** to the body any longer and the result is death.

Psalm 22:20: The personal pronoun “**me**” in the NKJV

*“Deliver **Me** [nephesh; my soul in the **KJV**] from the sword, my **precious life** from the power of the dog.”*

Ezekiel 18:4:

*“Behold, all **souls** [nephesh] are Mine; the **soul** [nephesh] of the father as well as the **soul** [nephesh] of the son is Mine; the **soul** [nephesh] who sins shall die.”*

Psalm 30:3:

*“O LORD, You brought my **soul** [nephesh] up from the grave[**I thought the soul went up when a person died**]; you have kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.”*

Psalm 49:15:

*“But God will redeem my **soul** [nephesh] from the power of the **grave** [notice that the soul is delivered from the grave and therefore it must go there after death], for He shall receive me.”*

Let’s take a look at some **New Testament texts** which use the word “**soul**”

1 Corinthians 15:45: Nephesh equivalent to psyche

*“And so it is written, “The first man Adam became a **living being** [psyche].” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.”*

Acts 2:41: Three thousand **souls** in KJV

*“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand **souls** [psyche] were added to them.”*

Acts 27:37: Seventy-six **persons** in KJV

*“And in all we were two hundred and seventy-six **persons** [psyche] on the ship.”*

Romans 13:1: Persons subject to governing authorities

*“Let every **soul** [psyche: **persons in NKJV**] be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.”*

Acts 27:22: No life lost on the ship at **Clauda**

*“And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of **life** [psyche] among you, but only of the ship.”*

Matthew 2:19, 20: All who sought the **life of Jesus** were dead

*“But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, 20 saying, “Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child’s **life** [psyche] are dead.”*

Matthew 20:28: There are other words available such as *bios* and *zoe*

*“ . . . just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His **life** [psyche] a ransom for many.”*

John 10:11:

*“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his **life** [psyche] for the sheep.”*

Acts 15:26:

*“ . . . Barnabas and Paul, 26 men who have risked their **lives** [psyche] for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Matthew 16:26:

*“For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own **soul** [psyche]? Or what will a man give in exchange for his **soul** [psyche]?”*

Luke 9:25:

*“For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is **himself** destroyed or lost?”*

Acts 12:23: King Herod was eaten by worms gave up his *psyche*. A medical term that means to breathe ones last, to die (Arndt and Gingrich Lexicon)

*“Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and **died** [exepsychen] literally: ‘gave up his life’.”*

Acts 5:10: The death of Sapphira

*“And immediately she fell at his feet and **breathed her last** [exepsychen: KJV, “yieded up the ghost”], and the young men came in and found her **dead**, and they carried her out and **buried her** beside her husband.”*

In the **New International Version** the word “soul” is translated with a **personal pronoun** or the like:

- **Acts 2:27, 31:** “Not leave my soul [me] in hell”
- **Acts 2:43:** “Fear came upon every soul [everyone]”
- **Romans 2:9:** **Human being** “tribulation and anguish upon every soul [human being] who does evil”
- **Romans 13:1:** **Everyone** “Let every soul [everyone] be subject to the higher powers”
- **Hebrews 10:38:** I “If one draw back my soul [I] has no pleasure in him”
- **Hebrews 10:39:** “Saving of the soul” [those who are saved]
- **James 5:20:** “He who converts a sinner saves a soul [him] from death”
- **Luke 21:19:** “In your patience possess ye your souls [yourselves]”

- **Acts 2:41: Not even translated** in the NIV: Two thousand were added”
- **Hebrews 13:7:** “Submit to those who rule because they watch out for your souls [you]”
- **Matthew 12:18: I** “Behold my servant with whom my soul [**I**] is well pleased”

Luke 12:19, 20: The **rich fool** who built **bigger barns**

*“And I will say to my **soul** [psyche], “**Soul** [psyche], you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.” ’ 20 But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your **soul** [psyche] will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ 21 So is he who lays up treasure for **himself**, and is not rich toward God.”*

Luke 12:19, 20, NIV: Rich fool

*“And I’ll say to **myself** [my soul], ‘**You** [soul] have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your **life** [soul] will be demanded from you.’”*

We use this type of **figurative language** in our speech today when we say:

- “Not a soul showed up for the **meeting**”
- “One hundred souls were **baptized**”
- “I feel **sorry** for that poor soul.”

James 5:19, 20: Saving a soul from death

*“Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a **soul** [psyche] from **death** [so the soul can die if it can be saved from death] and cover a multitude of sins.”*

Problem Texts

Acts 20:10: Paul and **Eutyches**

*“But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing him said, “Do not trouble yourselves, for his **life** [psyche; same as **KJV**] is in him.”*

Does the text say that his soul or life was **intangible, immortal** or **conscious**? No.

I Kings 17:17, 21, 22: The widow of **Zarepath**

*“Now it happened after these things that the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. And his sickness was so serious that there was no **breath** [neshamah] left in him. 21 And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, “O LORD my God, I pray, let this child’s [immortal from heaven?] **soul** [nephesh] come back to him.” 22 Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the **soul** [nephesh] of the child came back to him, and he **revived** [this word means “to live again”].*

Matthew 10:28: Killing the **body** but not the **soul**

*“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the **soul** [psyche]. But rather fear Him who is able to **destroy** both **soul** [psyche] and **body** in hell.”*

The contrast here is between the **present life and the future life**. What it is saying is this: “Don’t fear those who are able to take away your **present physical life** but cannot take away your **eternal life**. Rather fear the one who can do both!

The key is in **verse 39**:

*“He who finds his [present] **life** [psyche] will lose it, and he who loses his [present] life [psyche] for My sake will find it [eternal life].”*

The sense is even clearer in the parallel passage of **Luke 12:4, 5**:

*“And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the **body**, and after that have **no more that they can do**. 5 But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, **after He has killed**, has power to cast into **hell**; yes, I say to you, fear Him!”*

Let’s go back to our **original text** and examine it once again:

Genesis 35:18: Does it say here that her soul was **immortal** or **conscious** or went up to **heaven**? No! All of these are simple **assumptions**

*“And so it was, as her “[immortal?] **soul** was departing [to heaven?] (for she died) that she called his name Ben-Oni; but his father called him Benjamin.”*

Psalm 146:4: Thoughts perish

*“His **spirit** departs, he returns to his **earth**; in that very day his plans [thoughts: **KJV**] perish.”*

Psalm 104:29, 30: Death and creation

*“You hide Your face, they are troubled; You take away their **breath**, they die and return to their **dust**. 30 You send forth Your **Spirit**, they are **created**; and You renew the face of the earth.”*

Genesis 3:19: The word “**return**” is key

*“In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you **return** to the ground, for out of it you **were taken**; for dust you are and to dust you shall **return**.”*

Ecclesiastes 12:7: Spirit returns to God. There is more than meets the eye here

*“Then the dust will **return** to the earth as it was, and the spirit will **return to God** who gave it.”*

Romans 6:23: Only two options are available: **Life and death**. We must not attempt to redefine death to mean “everlasting life in misery.”

MISUNDERSTOOD TEXTS ON THE STATE OF THE DEAD

By Stephen Bohr

#8 – The Keys of Hades

Greek words with a Hebrew connotation

The words “*soul*,” “*spirit*” and “*hades*” were very **common** in the Greek world. The same words are used **extensively in the New Testament**.

The **critical question** is this: Should the meaning of these words in the New Testament be determined by how they are used by **Greek philosophers such as Plato and Socrates** or must we determine their meaning by how their **equivalent Hebrew words** were used by the writers of the Old Testament?

In order to ascertain the answer to this very important question, we will **study two words**. The first is the Hebrew word *Sheol* and the second is the Greek word *Hades*.

The Hebrew Word *Sheol*

The Hebrew word *sheol* is translated in the **KJV**:

- “**Grave**” some **30 times**
- “**Hell**” some **31 times**
- A **handful** of times it is translated “**pit**” (Numbers 16:30, 33).

In the **overwhelming majority** of the 31 times it is translated “**hell**” in the KJV, it could just as correctly have been translated “**grave**” or “**sepulcher**”. The following are examples where the **KJV** translates the word *sheol* as “grave”:

I Samuel 2:6: Notice the **synonymous parallelism**

“The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave [sheol; same in KJV]] and brings up.”

Psalm 49:14-15

*“Like sheep they are laid in the **grave** [sheol; same as KJV]; **death** shall feed on them; the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall be consumed in the grave, far from their dwelling. 15 But God will redeem **my soul** [nephesh] from the power of the **grave** [sheol; same as KJV], for He shall receive me.”*

Psalms 89:48: Notice the **synonymous parallelism**

*“What man can live and not see **death**? Can he deliver his life [soul in the KJV] from the power of the **grave** [sheol; same as KJV].”*

Ecclesiastes 9:10

*Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the **grave** [sheol; same as KJV] where you are going.”*

Isaiah 38:10

*“I said, “In the prime of my life I shall go to the **gates of Sheol** [the grave, KJV]; I am deprived of the remainder of my years.”*

Isaiah 38:18

*“For **Sheol** [the grave, KJV] cannot **thank You**, **death** cannot **praise You**; those who **go down to the pit** cannot hope for Your truth.”*

Psalms 6:5

*“For in **death** there is no **remembrance** of You; in the **grave** [grave in the KJV] who will give You **thanks**?”*

Job 14:10-15

*“But man **dies** and is **laid away**; indeed he **breathes his last** and where is he? 11 As water disappears from the sea, and a river becomes **parched** and **dries** up, 12 so man **lies down** and does not rise. Till the heavens **are no more**, they will **not awake** nor be **roused** from their **sleep**. 13 “Oh, that You would hide me in the **grave** [he wants to go to sheol], that You would **conceal me** until Your wrath is past, that You would appoint me a set time, and remember me! 14 If a man **dies**, shall he **live again**? All the days of my hard service I will wait, Till my **change** comes. 15 You shall **call**, and I will **answer** You; You shall **desire** the work of Your hands.”*

Job 7:9

*“As the cloud disappears and vanishes away, so he who goes down to the **grave** [sheol] does not come up.”*

The following are examples of places where the KJV translates the word sheol with “hell”:

Psalms 116:3: Note the **synonymous parallelism**

*“The pains of **death** surrounded me, and the pangs of **Sheol** [“hell” in the KJV] laid hold of me; I found trouble and sorrow.”*

Proverbs 7:27: Note the **synonymous parallelism** in the words of a harlot

*“Her house is the way to hell [sheol], descending to the chambers of **death**.”*

Proverbs 5:5: Notice the **synonymous parallelism**

*Her [the strange woman’s] feet go down to **death**, her steps lay hold of **hell** [sheol].”*

Proverbs 15:24: Notice the **antithetical parallelism**

*“The way of **life** winds **upward** for the wise, that he may turn away from **hell** [sheol] **below**.”*

Isaiah 28:15: Notice the **synonymous parallelism**

*“Because you have said, “We have made a **covenant** with **death**, and with **Sheol** [hell in the KJV] we are in **agreement**.”*

Amos 9:2

*“Though they **dig** into **hell** [sheol], from there my hand shall take them; though they **climb** up to heaven, from there I will bring them **down**.”*

Jonah 2:2

*“And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of **hell** [sheol] cried I, and thou heardest my voice.”*

*“And he said: “I cried out to the LORD because of my affliction, and He answered me. “Out of the belly of **Sheol** [hell in the KJV] I cried, and You heard my voice.”*

The New Testament Equivalent of Sheol

The question which must be answered now is this: Which **New Testament word** is equivalent to *sheol*? The answer is not hard to find, it is the world *hades*. Before I prove this, allow me to give you a few statistics about *hades* in the various Bible versions

Hades in the New Testament

The word hades is used **11 times** in the New Testament. **Only once** [in the parable of the **rich man and Lazarus** where Jesus is clearly using the **common beliefs** of the day as a teaching vehicle] does it describe a **place of burning**. The other ten times it could very well be translated “grave”.

The King James Translation of Hades

- **Ten times** it is translated “hell”
- **Only once** is translated “grave” (**I Corinthians 15:55**)

The **New King James Version** transliterates the Greek word in **all eleven references**

The NIV translation of Hades

- **Twice** translated “depths” (**Matthew 11:23; Luke 10:15**)
- **Thrice** translated “grave” (**Acts 2:27, 31; I Corinthians 15:55**)
- **Five times** it is transliterated “*hades*” (**Matthew 16:18; Revelation 1:18; 6:8; 20:13, 14**)
- **Only once** translated **hell** (**Luke 16:23**)

Now, how do we know that *hades* in the **New Testament** is equivalent to *sheol* in the **Old Testament**?

Hosea 13:14

*"I will ransom them from the power of the **grave** [sheol]; I will redeem them from **death**. **O Death**, I will be your plagues! **O Grave** [sheol], I will be your destruction! Pity is hidden from My eyes."*

1 Corinthians 15:54-55

*"So when this **corruptible** has put on **incorruption**, and this **mortal** has put on **immortality** then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "**Death** is swallowed up in victory." 55 "**O Death**, where is your sting? **O Hades** [grave in the KJV], where is your victory?"*

Psalm 16:8-10

*"I have set the **LORD** always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved. 9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My **flesh** also will **rest** in hope. 10 For You will not leave **my soul** [nephesh] in **Sheol** [hell in the KJV], Nor will You allow Your **Holy One** to see **corruption**."*

Synonymous Parallelism

Thou
Thou

soul
Holy One

hell
corruption

Acts 2:25-27

*“For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: 26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my **flesh** shall rest in hope: 27 Because thou wilt not leave my **soul** [psyche] in **hell** [hades], neither wilt thou suffer thine **Holy One** to see **corruption**.*

*“For David says concerning Him: ‘I foresaw the LORD always before my face, for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. 26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; moreover my **flesh** also will rest in hope. 27 For You will not leave my **soul** in **Hades** [hell in the KJV], nor will You allow Your **Holy One** to see **corruption**.”*

Acts 2:31

*He, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the **resurrection** of the Christ, that His soul [psyche] was not left in Hades [hell in the KJV], nor did His **flesh** see **corruption**.*

Revelation 6:8

*“So I looked, and behold, a **pale** horse. And the name of him who sat on it was **Death**, and **Hades** [hell in the KJV] followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.”*

Matthew 16:18

*“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of **Hades** [hell in the KJV] shall not prevail against it.”*

The context indicates that the reason why the gates [remember that in the Old Testament *sheol* had gates] of *hades* would not prevail against the church is because Jesus was going to rise on the third day!!

Luke 10:15

*“And you, Capernaum, who are **exalted to heaven**, will be thrust down to **Hades** [hell in the KJV].”*

Matthew 11:23 *And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades [hell in the KJV].”*

Two Characteristics of the Grave

Psalms 115:17

*“The **dead** do not praise the LORD nor any who go **down** into silence.”*

Job 17:13, 14

*“If I wait for the **grave** [sheol] as my house, If I make my bed in the **darkness**, 14 If I say to **corruption**, 'You are my father,' and to the **worm**, 'You are my mother and my sister,'”*

There is no place **darker** or more **silent** than to be **six feet under!!**

- **Satan** as the **jailer**
- The **tomb** as the **jail**
- The dead as the **prisoners**
- The jailer is **inside** and **has the keys** and **dares Jesus** to go in and **get them**.
- Jesus **goes into the tomb** and takes away the keys
- He **comes out** on the third day and says: *“I am the resurrection and the life, because I live, you will live also.”*
- Tell here the story of the resurrection of **Moses**

Revelation 1:17, 18: This illustration is not my own

*“And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. 18 I am He who **lives**, and was **dead**, and behold, I am **alive forevermore**. Amen. And I have the keys of **Hades** [hell in the KJV] and of **Death**.”*

Revelation 1:5

*‘ . . . and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the **firstborn from the dead**, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.’”*

Old Testament resurrected saints: Moses, the widow’s son, the dead body which touched Elisha’s bones

New Testament resurrected saints: The son of the widow of Nain, Jairus’s daughter, Lazarus

The Christian Hope is in the Resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:16-22

*“For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. 17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! 18 Then also those who have **fallen asleep** in Christ have **perished** [how could they perish if they are in heaven?]. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. 20 But now **Christ is risen from the dead**, and has*

become the **first-fruits** of those who have **fallen asleep**. 21 For since by man came **death**, by Man also came the **resurrection** of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all **die**, even so in Christ all shall be **made alive**.”

Matthew 27:51-53: Jesus took the **sample** to heaven

“Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, 52 and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; 53 and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.”

Hebrews 2:14-15

“ Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that **through death** He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

Anti-venom is made with **venom**. That is to say: Jesus **defeated death by His death!** (remember the serpent that was raised up in the wilderness)

Revelation 20:13-15

“And the sea gave up the **dead** which were in it; and **death** and hell [hades] delivered up the **dead** which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And **death** and hell [hades] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the **second death**. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

“The sea gave up the **dead** who were in it, and **Death** and **Hades** [hell in the KJV] delivered up the **dead** [notice that the people in **hades** were dead, not alive] who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 Then **Death** and **Hades** were cast [hades cannot be the lake of fire because it is cast into the lake of fire] into the lake of fire. This is the **second death**. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire [notice when the wicked are cast into hell].”

1 Corinthians 15:26

“The **last enemy** that will be destroyed is death.”

Revelation 21:4

“And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be **no more death**, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

Romans 8:11

“But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”

Luke 16:23

“And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.”

End by talking about the Mount of Transfiguration and the mini kingdom represented there.

MISUNDERSTOOD TEXTS ON THE STATE OF THE DEAD

By Stephen Bohr

#9 – The Dead Who Stand Before God

Some Facts about the Pre Advent Judgment

Revelation 14:6, 7: The Judgment takes place **before** the second coming of Jesus

*“Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth--to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people-- 7 saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment **has come**; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”*

Daniel 7:9, 10: The judgment takes place in **heaven**

“I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire; 10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.”

2 Corinthians 5:10: All must appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

*“For we must **all appear** before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things **done in the body**, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”*

The Great Controversy, p. 482: About the righteous and the same could be said about the wicked

*“The righteous dead **will not be raised until after the judgment** at which they are accounted worthy of “the resurrection of life.” Hence **they will not be present in person at the tribunal** when their records are examined and their cases decided.”*

The Great Controversy, p. 483:

*“As the **books of record** are opened in the judgment, the **lives** of all who have believed on Jesus come in review before God. Beginning with those who **first lived** upon the earth, our Advocate presents the cases of each successive generation and closes with the living.*

John 5:28, 29: **Where are people** who have died before the second coming of Jesus? So how can they appear before the judgment seat of Christ in heaven?

*“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are **in the graves** will hear His voice 29 and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.”*

Matthew 16:27: **When** will people receive their **rewards**?

*“For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and **then** He will reward each according to his works.”*

The Great White Throne: Convulsions in heaven and earth when Jesus comes.

Revelation 6:14-17: The second coming of Jesus

*“Then the sky **receded as a scroll** when it is rolled up, and every mountain and **island was moved out of its place [key word also in 20:11]**. 15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, 16 and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the **face [vital word also in Revelation 20:11]** of Him who sits on the **throne** and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”*

Revelation 20:11 describes the same scene as **Revelation 6:15-17**

Revelation 20:11:

*“Then I saw a **great white throne** and Him who sat on it, from whose **face the earth and the heaven fled away**. And there was found no **place** for them.”*

The Dead who stand Before God: How and When?

Revelation 20:12:

*“And I saw **the dead**, small and great, **standing before God**, and **books** were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And **the dead were judged** according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.”*

The dead now stand before God. **Two questions** beg to be asked:

- **First**, how can **dead people stand** before God?
- **Second**, **who are these dead** who stand before God?

The dead who stand before God **are not the righteous** because they were judged **before** the second coming of Jesus and these are judged **during** the thousand years.

Revelation 20:5:

“But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.”

The righteous will participate in this millennial judgment

Revelation 20:4:

*“And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and **judgment was committed to them**. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.”*

I Corinthians 6:1-3:

*“Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the **saints**? 2 Do you not know that the **saints** will judge the **world**? And if the world will be judged by **you**, are **you** unworthy to **judge** the smallest matters? 3 Do you not know that we shall **judge angels**? How much more, things that pertain to this life?”*

How do the wicked dead **stand before God** during the thousand years if they do **not live again until the thousand years are ended**? **Revelation 20:12** clearly explains that they stand before God through the **record of their lives**.

Revelation 20:12:

*“And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and **books were opened**. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged **according to their works**, by the things which were **written in the books**.”*

An Expanded Meaning of the Word “Spirit”

In the course of time the spirit of man becomes **individualized** or **personalized**. When Jesus comes He will not only give us the **breath of life** but will return our **self-identity** which He has **preserved** in the books.

Ecclesiastes 12:7:

*“Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and **the spirit will return to God** who gave it.”*

II Corinthians 5:10:

*“For we must **all appear** before the judgment seat of **Christ**, that each one may receive the things **done in the body**, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”*

The Records are brought to view while the wicked are **still dead**. The books (plural) contain an **exact transcript** of our **earthly lives**, inside and out.

Revelation 20:12:

*“And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were **judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.**”*

The book of life contains the names of all who received Jesus as Savior and Lord

Philippians 4:3:

*“And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose **names** are in the **Book of Life.**”*

Revelation 3:5:

*“He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his **name** from the Book of Life; but I will **confess his name** before My Father and before His angels.”*

Biblical examples of the extended meaning of the word “SPIRIT”

Luke 8:55:

*“Then **her** spirit returned, and she arose immediately. And He commanded that she be given something to eat.”*

Acts 7:59, 60:

*“And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, “Lord Jesus, receive **my** spirit.” 60 Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin.” And when he had said this, he **fell asleep.**”*

Luke 23:46:

*“And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, “Father, ‘into Your hands I commit **My** spirit [pneuma].’” Having said this, He breathed His last [pneuma].”*

Job 19:25-27 (King James Version more forceful)

*“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: 26 And though after **my skin** worms destroy **this body**, yet in **my flesh** shall I see God. 27 Whom I shall see **for myself**, and **mine eyes** shall behold, and **not another**; though my reins be consumed within me.”*

I Thessalonians 5:28:

*“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be **with you**. Amen.”*

Galatians 6:18:

*“Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be **with your spirit**. Amen.”*

The Confirmatory Testimony of Ellen G. White

Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, volume 6, pp. 1092-1093:

“Our personal identity is preserved in the resurrection, though not the same particles of matter or material substance as went into the grave. The wondrous works of God are a mystery to man. The spirit, the character of man, is returned to God, there to be preserved. In the resurrection every man will have his own character. God in His own time will call forth the dead giving again the breath of life, and bidding the dry bones live. The same form will come forth, but it will be free from disease and every defect. It lives again bearing the same individuality of features, so that friend will recognize friend. There is no law of God in nature which shows that God gives back the same identical particles of matter which composed the body before death. God shall give the righteous dead a body that will please Him.”

The Great Controversy, p. 664:

*“There are kings and generals who conquered nations, valiant men who never lost a battle, proud, ambitious warriors whose approach made kingdoms tremble. In death these experienced no change. As they come up from the grave, they **resume the current of their thoughts just where it ceased**. They are actuated by the same desire to conquer that ruled them when they fell.”*

The example of a **video camera**: You can **video tape today** and **turn off the camera**. Then you can turn on the camera **ten years later** and video tape again. On the tape there is **no time interval** between the two video tapings. Our whole life is a **video taping session**. God video tapes our thoughts, feelings, emotions, words and actions. When we **die**, the video **camera is shut off**. At the resurrection it is **turned on again**. There has been no time interval on the tape. We will **pick up** where we **left off**.

The Spirits of Just Men made Perfect

Hebrews 12:22-24:

*“But you **have come** to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are **registered** [written] in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the **spirits of just men made perfect**, 24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.”*

Hebrews 11:39-40:

*“And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that **they should not be made perfect apart from us**.”*

Hebrews 7:19:

*“For the law made **nothing perfect**; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a **better hope**, through which we **draw near to God**.”*

Hebrews 10:1:

*“For the law, having a **shadow** of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can **never** with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make **those who approach perfect**.”*

Hebrews 10:14:

*“For by one offering **He has perfected forever** those who are being sanctified.”*

Hebrews 5:7-9:

*“. . . who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, 8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. 9 And **having been perfected [having become qualified by His work]** became the **author of eternal salvation** to all who obey Him.”*

A computer is another **illustration**. God keeps a **backup** of each person. Talk here about the **sanctuary service**. How our **greatest assurance** is to have the sins covered by the blood in the sanctuary. How the sins were **deleted on the Day of Atonement** and how God will delete our sins from our records before Jesus comes.

The wicked resurrect after the one thousand years and personally **see their records**. Then they are destroyed (Revelation 20:5)

Revelation 20:13

*“The sea **gave up the dead** who were in it, and Death and Hades **delivered up the dead** who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.”*

Revelation 20:14, 15

*“ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the **second death**. 15 And anyone **not found written in the Book of Life** was cast into the lake of fire.”*

MISUNDERSTOOD TEXTS ON THE STATE OF THE DEAD

By Stephen Bohr

#10 – The Souls Under the Alter

Introduction

Revelation 6:9-11:

*“When He opened the fifth seal, I saw **under the altar** the souls of those who had been **slain** for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “**How long**, [Until when?] O Lord, holy and true, until You **judge and avenge** our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” 11 Then a **white robe** was given to **each of them**; and it was said to them that they should **rest** a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be **killed as they were**, was completed.”*

Important Questions about the Passage:

- When does this scene take place?
- Which altar are these souls under?
- Why were they killed?
- What were they praying about?
- What do the white robes represent?
- Why were they told to rest for a season?
- Is there more than one group of martyrs?
- When will their plea be answered?

The Old Testament Background: Cain and Abel

Genesis 4:3, 4: *“And in the process of time it came to pass that **Cain** brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. 4 **Abel** also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering,”*

They both brought an **offering** to place on the **altar of sacrifice**. Abel offered an animal sacrifice and thus **obeyed God and worshiped** as God had commanded. He was **righteous**.

Genesis 4:8: Cain killed his brother

*“Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and **killed him.**”*

Hebrews 11:4: Abel was **righteous**

*“By faith Abel offered to God a **more excellent sacrifice** than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he **being dead still speaks.**”*

1 John 3:12: Cain was **wicked**

*“. . . not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's **righteous.**”*

Satan was the **ultimate cause of this** (1 John 3:12). A **great travesty** in justice had been committed. The blood of Abel **cried out for vindication** and justice. The **evil won and the righteous lost**. The record needed to be **rectified**.

Genesis 4:10: The **blood of Abel cried out** from the **ground** for justice

*“And He said, “What have you done? The **voice of your brother's blood cries out** to Me from the **ground.**”*

Further Old Testament Background: The Blood under the Altar

There were two altars: **Sacrifice and incense**. Which one is here referred to? Let's take a closer look at the **Old Testament sacrificial service** to answer this question.

Leviticus 4:7: Blood **poured out** at the **base of the altar** of sacrifice

*““And the priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD, which is in the tabernacle of the congregation: and shall **pour** all the blood of the bullock **at the bottom of the altar** of the burnt offering, which is **at the door** of the tabernacle of the congregation.”*

- The blood of the sacrifice was poured out at the **base of the altar** of sacrifice.
- At the altar of **incense no blood** was offered, only incense was placed there.
- The expression “**poured out**” is used in the Old Testament to describe the **shedding of innocent blood** and in the New Testament to describe what the wicked did with the **blood of the righteous (Revelation 16:6)**
- The word “**slain**” is identical to the one used in **Revelation 5:6** to describe the sacrifice of Jesus as a lamb on the cross.

- The **altar of sacrifice** represents **Christ's sacrifice on earth** so these souls must be crying out on earth, not in heaven.

The Soul and the Blood: The words “**soul**” and “**blood**” are **interchangeable**. It is the same to say that the **soul cried out** as to say the **blood cried out**

Leviticus 17:11:

*“For the life [**nephesh**] of the flesh is **in the blood**, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.”*

Deuteronomy 12:23:

*“Only be sure that you do not eat the blood, for the blood is the **life** [**nephesh**]; you may not eat the **life** [**nephesh**] with the meat.”*

Transition: The crying out has **two historical stages**. That is to say, there are **two groups of martyrs**. When was the first group slaughtered?

The First Stage of the Roman Catholic Papacy

Review the **sequence of powers in Daniel 7** underlining the **dates** and speaking of the **little horn**

Daniel 7:21: War on the saints

“I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them.”

Daniel 7:25: How long the war was to last

*“He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then **the saints** shall be given into his hand for a **time and times and half a time**. “*

Review the **sequence of powers in Revelation 13:2** and then speak of the **time frame for the beast**.

Revelation 13:5, 7:

*“And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for **forty-two months**. 7 It was granted to him to make **war with the saints** and to **overcome them**. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.”*

The deadly wound ended the first stage of martyrs

Revelation 13:10:

*“He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who **kills** with the **sword** must be **killed with the sword**. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.”*

Revelation 13:3:

“And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded.”

Romans 13:1-4

*“Let every soul be subject to the **governing authorities**. For there is no **authority** except from God, and the **authorities** that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the **authority** resists the ordinance of God and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For **rulers** are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the **authority**? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. 4 For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear **the sword** in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.”*

The First Stage during the middle Ages

Speak here of the stages of the **first four churches** and the time frame of each according to scholars.

Revelation 2:20-23: Review the **seven churches** and where **Thyatira** fits in

*“Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman **Jezebel**, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit **sexual immorality** and eat things sacrificed to idols. 21 And I gave her time to repent of her **sexual immorality**, and she did not repent. 22 Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into **great tribulation**, unless they repent of their deeds. 23 I will kill her **children** with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you **according to your works**.”*

II Kings 9:22: The Old Testament background

*“Now it happened, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, "Is it peace, Jehu?" So he answered, "What peace, as long as the **harlotries** of your mother Jezebel and her **witchcraft** are so many?"*

I Kings 18:4:

*“For so it was, while Jezebel **massacred** the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah had taken one hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and had fed them with bread and water.)”*

II Kings 9:7:

*"You shall strike down the house of Ahab your master, that I may **avenge the blood** of My servants the prophets, and the **blood of all the servants of the LORD**, at the hand of Jezebel."*

The First Group of Martyrs Rest

Revelation 6:11:

*"Then a **white robe** was given to **each of them**; and it was said to them that they should **rest** a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be **killed as they were**, was completed."*

Revelation 14:13:

*"Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the **dead** who **die** in the Lord from now on.' " "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may **rest** from their labors, and their works follow them."*

The Second Stage of the Roman Catholic Papacy

Revelation 13:3

". . . and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast."

Revelation 13:11, 12, 15: A **second beast** helps the first beast's **deadly wound** to heal and persecution results

*"Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. 12 And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it **to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed**. 15 He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be **killed**."*

The Second Stage of the Martyrs

Revelation 17:1, 6: Same harlot a during the **Middle Ages** sheds the **blood** of God's people as in the **past**

*"Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the **great harlot** who sits on many waters. 6 I saw the woman, drunk with the **blood of the saints** and with the **blood of the martyrs of Jesus**. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement."*

Revelation 16:5, 6: The **plea** of the **martyrs** will be answered in the **plagues**

*"And I heard the angel of the waters saying: "You are **righteous**, O Lord, the One who is and who was and who is to be, because You **have judged** these things. 6 For they have **shed the blood** of saints and prophets, and You have **given them blood to drink**. For it is their just due."*

Revelation 19:1, 2: The martyrs victorious in heaven

*"After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! 2 For **true and righteous** are His judgments, because He **has judged** the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He **has avenged** on her the blood of His servants shed by her."*

Revelation 20:4:

*"And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then **I saw the souls** of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And **they lived** and reigned with Christ for a thousand years."*

What are the White Robes?

Revelation 7:13, 14:

*"Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" 14 And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of **the great tribulation**, and washed their robes [stole] and made them white in the **blood of the Lamb**."*

Matthew 22:11-13

*"But when the king came in to **see the guests**, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. 12 So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here **without a wedding garment?**' And he was speechless. 13 Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth**.'"*

Revelation 19:6-8:

*"And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! 7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the **marriage of the Lamb** has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in **fine linen**, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the **righteous acts** of the saints."*

Hebrews 12:24: The blood of Abel cries out for justice while the blood of Jesus provides righteousness

*"... to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that **speaks** better things than that of Abel."*

MISUNDERSTOOD TEXTS ON THE STATE OF THE DEAD
By Stephen Bohr

11 - Undying Worm & Unquenchable Fire

Problematic Texts

Matthew 25:41:

"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

Matthew 25:46:

"And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

2 Thessalonians 1:9:

"These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power."

Mark 9:43-44: Then it continues in the same manner with the **foot** and the **eye**

"If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell [geena], into the fire that shall never [not in the original. Literally it says 'the unquenchable fire'] be quenched-- 44 where 'Their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.'

The Greatest Problem Text

Revelation 20:10: Will Satan be tormented for **eternity**?

"The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are [were cast]. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."

Solving the Problem of the Everlasting Fire

Genesis 19:24, 28: Fire and brimstone from the Lord out of the heavens and the smoke goes up

*“Then the LORD rained **brimstone and fire** on Sodom and Gomorrah, **from the LORD out of the heavens**. 28 Then he [Abraham] looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain; and he saw, and behold, the **smoke** of the land which **went up** like the smoke of a furnace.”*

Jude 1:7: Burnt with eternal fire

*“. . . as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of **eternal fire**.”*

2 Peter 2:6: Reduced to ashes

*“. . . and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into **ashes**, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly.”*

Deuteronomy 4:23, 24: God is the consuming fire

*“Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God which He made with you, and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of anything which the LORD your God has forbidden you. 24 For the LORD your **God is a consuming fire**, a jealous God.”*

Hebrews 12:28, 29: God is the consuming fire

*“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 29 For our **God is a consuming fire**.”*

Exodus 24:15-17: God’s glory is the fire

*“Then Moses went up into the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain. 16 Now the **glory of the LORD** rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. 17 The sight of the **glory of the LORD** was like a **consuming fire** on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel.”*

Revelation 15:2: Sea of glass mingled with fire

*“And I saw something **like a sea of glass mingled with fire**, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God.”*

Review the Meaning of the Problem Texts

- **Everlasting fire: Fire does not go out**
- **Everlasting punishment: Never live again**
- **Everlasting destruction: Destroyed forever**

What about Unquenchable Fire?

Matthew 3:12: Asbestos

- *“His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the **chaff** with **unquenchable fire.**”*
- The **Branch Davidian** complex in **Waco** was destroyed by unquenchable fire
- The **Battle Creek Sanitarium** was destroyed in **1903** by unquenchable fire. Fire chief Weeks: “The water works more like gasoline”
- **Eusebius** writes about **Chronium, Julian, Epinachus and Alexander** who were **martyred** with unquenchable fire.
- Unquenchable fire is fire which **cannot be extinguished** until it has **consumed everything** there is to consume.

The Wicked are Devoured

Malachi 4:1-3

*“For behold, the day is coming, **burning like an oven**, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be **stubble**. And the day which is coming shall **burn them up**,” says the LORD of hosts, “That will **leave them neither root nor branch**. 2 But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves. 3 You shall trample the wicked, for they **shall be ashes** under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this,” says the LORD of hosts.”*

Revelation 20:9:

*“They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and **devoured** them.”*

Matthew 13:4:

*“And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and **devoured** them.”*

Revelation 21:8: From which there is **no resurrection**

*“But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with **fire and brimstone**, which is the **second death.**”*

The Righteous, not the Wicked, will live in the Everlasting Fire

Isaiah 33:14, 15:

*"The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness has seized the hypocrites: "Who among us shall dwell with the **devouring fire**? Who among us shall dwell with **everlasting burnings**?" 15 He who walks righteously and speaks he who despises the gain of oppressions, who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil."*

How long will the Wicked Suffer?

Luke 12:47, 48:

*"And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with **many stripes**. 48 But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with **few**. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more."*

Revelation 20:13:

*"The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one **according to his works**."*

Would a **common sinner** deserve the same punishment as **Adolph Hitler**? Would it be just for a judge to punish a **traffic violation** and **murder** with the same sentence?

Isaiah 66:22-23: The text we love to quote

"For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain. 23 And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD."

Isaiah 66:24: Outside the city for weeks and months

*"And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses [carcasses] of the men who have transgressed against Me for their worm **does not die**, And their fire **is not quenched**. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh."*

The Problem Text

Revelation 20:10:

*"The devil who deceived them was cast into the lake of **fire and brimstone** where the beast and the false prophet are [were cast]. And they will be **tormented** day and night **forever and ever**."*

Isaiah 34:9, 10:

*“Its streams shall be turned into **pitch**, and its dust into **brimstone**; its land shall become **burning pitch**. 10 It shall not be quenched **night or day**; its smoke shall ascend **forever**. From generation to generation it **shall lie waste**; no one shall pass through it **forever and ever**.”*

Both the Hebrew and Greek expression refer to a **long and indefinite** period of time. But the fire **does go out eventually**. The expression in Revelation 20:10 is literally says: “**unto the ages of the ages**.” In Spanish it is translated “**por los siglos de los siglos**.”

Allan Macrae, president and professor of Old Testament Theology at the Biblical School of Theology in **Hatfield, Pennsylvania** states:

*“The LXX generally translates **olam** by **aion** which has essentially the same range of meaning. That neither the Hebrew nor the Greek word itself contains the idea of **endlessness** is shown both by the fact that they sometimes refer to events or conditions that occurred at a definite point in the past and also by the fact that sometimes it is thought desirable to repeat the word, not merely saying ‘forever,’ but ‘forever and ever.’” Allan Macrae, Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, volume 2, pp. 672, 673.*

James Hope **Moulton** and George **Milligan** explain:

*“In general, the word depicts **that of which the horizon is not in view**, whether the horizon be at an **infinite distance**. . . or whether it lies **no further** than the span of a Caesar’s life.” The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1952), p. 16. *Emphasis supplied.**

*“In the plural aion formulae the meaning of aion merges into that of a **long but limited stretch of time**. In particular, **aion** in this sense signifies the time or duration of the world, i. e., **time as limited by creation and conclusion**. At this point we are confronted by the remarkable fact that in the Bible the same word **aion** is used to indicate two things which are **profoundly antithetical, namely, the eternity of God and the duration of the world**. This twofold sense, which **aion** shares with the Hebrew **olam**, points back to a concept of eternity in which eternity is identified with the **duration of the world**.” Gerhard Kittel, Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, volume 1, p. 202 *Emphasis supplied.**

Satan will Burn out

When I say, “I will **love you forever and ever**” it means for an indefinite period till death do us part!!

Ezekiel 28:18, 19: Satan will **become ashes and be no more** so he can’t burn forever

*“You defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your trading; therefore I brought fire from your midst; it **devoured** you, and I **turned you to ashes** upon the earth in the sight of all who saw you. 19 All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you; you have become a horror, and **shall be no more forever**.” ’ ’*

Malachi 4:1-3: Root and branch will burn out and become ashes

*"For behold, the day is coming, **burning** like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be **stubble**. And the day which is coming shall **burn them up**," says the LORD of hosts, "That will leave them neither **root** nor **branch**. 2 But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves. 3 You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be **ashes** under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this," says the LORD of hosts."*

The Testimony of Ellen G. White

*"Then I saw thrones, and Jesus and the redeemed saints sat upon them; and the saints reigned as kings and priests unto God. Christ, in union with His people, judged the wicked dead, comparing their acts with the statute book, the Word of God, and deciding every case according to the deeds done in the body [Revelation 20:11, 12]. Then they meted out to the wicked **the portion** which they must suffer, **according to their works** [I Corinthians 6:2; Revelation 20:11, 12]; and it was written against their names in the book of death. Satan also and his angels were judged by Jesus and the saints [Revelation 6:3]. **Satan's punishment was to be far greater** [in terms of length] than that of those whom he had deceived. His suffering would so far exceed theirs as to bear **no comparison** with it [Revelation 20:9]. After all those whom he had deceived had perished, Satan was still to live and suffer on **much longer**." Early Writings, p. 290*

*"I saw that some were **quickly destroyed**, while others **suffered longer**. They were punished **according to the deeds done in the body**. Some were **many days** consuming, and just as long as there was a portion of them unconsumed, all the sense of suffering remained. Said the angel, "The worm of life shall not die; their fire shall not be quenched as long as there is the least particle for it to prey upon."*

*Satan and his angels **suffered long**. Satan bore not only the weight and punishment of his own sins, but also of the sins of the redeemed host, which had been placed upon him; and he must also suffer for the ruin of souls which he had caused. Then I saw that Satan and all the wicked host **were consumed**, and the **justice of God** was satisfied [key point]; and all the angelic host and all the redeemed saints, with a loud voice said, "Amen!"*

*Said the angel: 'Satan is the **root**, his children are the **branches**. They are now consumed root and branch. They have died an **everlasting death**. They are **never to have a resurrection**, and God will have a **clean universe**.' Early Writings, pp. 293, 294.*

What is Ellen White's Biblical Foundation for what she says?

In the **daily service** the sins **entered** the sanctuary through the **blood** of the sacrifice. At the **end of the year** the sins that had entered by the blood were **removed** and placed on the head of the scapegoat.

Leviticus 16:7:

*"He shall take the **two goats** and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting."*

Leviticus 16:20-22:

*"And when he has made an **end of atoning** for the Holy Place, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, he shall bring the **live goat**. 21 Aaron shall lay **both his hands** on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the **iniquities** of the children of Israel, and all their **transgressions**, concerning all their **sins**, putting them **on the head of the goat**, and shall send it away into the **wilderness** by the hand of a suitable man. 22 The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an **uninhabited land**; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness."*

Leviticus 23:29-30: The **wicked** were cut off for their **own sins** on the Day of Atonement—only **forgiven sins** were placed on the **scapegoat**

*"For any person who is not afflicted in soul on that same day shall be **cut off** from his people. 30 And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will **destroy** from among his people."*

God's Strange Act

Isaiah 28:21:

*"For the LORD will rise up as at Mount Perazim, He will be angry as in the Valley of Gibeon-- that He may do His work, His awesome [strange] work, and bring to pass His act, His **unusual** act."*

The fire falls on the earth according to **Revelation 20:7-10:**

*"Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the **earth**, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. 9 They went up on the breadth of the earth and **surrounded** the camp of the saints and the **beloved city**. And **fire** came **down** from **God** out of **heaven** [remember Sodom and Gomorrah] and **devoured** them. 10 The devil who deceived them, was cast into the **lake of fire and brimstone** where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be **tormented** day and night **forever and ever** [for a long, long time]."*

Read **Revelation 21:3-5** where God promises to make everything new.

"To sin, wherever found, "our God is a consuming fire." Heb. 12:29. In all who submit to His power the Spirit of God will consume sin. But if men cling to sin, they become identified with it. Then the glory of God, which destroys sin, must destroy them. Jacob, after his night of wrestling with the Angel, exclaimed, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." Gen. 32: 30. Jacob had been guilty of a great sin in his conduct toward Esau; but he had repented. His transgression had been forgiven, and his sin purged; therefore he could endure the revelation of God's presence. But wherever men came before God while willfully cherishing evil, they were destroyed. At the second advent of Christ the wicked shall be consumed "with the Spirit of His mouth," and destroyed "with the brightness of His coming." 2 Thessalonians 2:8. The light of the glory of God, which imparts life to the righteous, will slay the wicked. DA 107, 108

MISUNDERSTOOD TEXTS ON THE STATE OF THE DEAD

By Stephen Bohr

#12 – Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead

God Created Matter and Time and they were Good

Genesis 1:5: God created **time**

*“God called the light **Day**, and the darkness He called **Night**. So the evening and the morning were the first day.”*

Genesis 1:14: God created heavenly bodies to **mark time**

*“Then God said, “Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the **day** from the **night**; and let them be for **signs** and **seasons**, and for **days** and **years**.”*

Genesis 2:7: Man was formed of **matter**

*“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 being.”*

Genesis 2:21-23: Woman was made from **matter**

*“And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his **ribs**, and closed up the **flesh** in its place. 22 Then the **rib** which the LORD God had taken from man He **made into a woman**, and He brought her to the man. 23 And Adam said: “This is now **bone** of my bones and **flesh** of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”*

Genesis 1:31: Both **time** and **matter** were declared **very good** by **God Himself**

“Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”

Genesis 2:9: The **tree of life** was to sustain **matter** in its pristine state **forever**.

Promise of Death in Case of Sin

Genesis 2:16, 17: Decay and death comes in not because time and matter are evil but rather because of **sin**

*“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall **surely die.**”*

Genesis 3:6:

*“So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, **she** took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and **he** ate.”*

Genesis 3:22-24: No tree to **perpetuate life**

*“Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and **live forever**”— 23 therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. 24 So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the Garden of Eden and a flaming sword which turned every way, **to guard the way to the tree of life.**”*

Romans 5:12: Sin brought **decay** and **death**

“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.”

Romans 6:23:

“For the wages of sin is death. . .”

An undeniable fact of life: The passing of time deteriorates matter. As time goes by, the body gets **wrinkled, old, sick,** and eventually **dies.**

This is **not God’s original plan**—it is the direct result of **sin** acting upon the body.

The Greek Philosophers and the Body Soul Relationship

The Greek philosophers had **no special revelation** from God, but they were **keen observers.** They saw that the passing of **time deteriorates matter** and that **in the material body** of man the **basest of evil passions** are exhibited. They came to the conclusion that **time is evil** and the **body (because it is composed of matter) is evil.** If man could get rid of his **body** and **time** and enter a **timeless, matterless** sphere then he could also get rid of his **evil passions** and of the inevitable **consequences of time and space**

The Inner Contradiction in Man

"I see the better things, and I agree with them, but I follow the worse." **Ovid**, *Metamorphoses*, 7:20

"Men love and hate their vices at the same time." **Seneca**, *Letters*, 112.3

"For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." **Paul**, *Romans* 7:19

"Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." **Paul**, *Romans* 7:20

"A perishable body weighs down the soul, and this earthly tent burdens the thoughtful mind." **Wisdom of Solomon** 9:15

The Body as the Prison of the Soul

The Orphic Jingle: *Soma Sema* (The body is a sepulcher)

I am ashamed to have a body. I am a "poor soul shackled to a corpse." **Epictetus**, *Fragment 23*

"Disdain the flesh, blood and bones and network, a twisted skein of nerves, veins arteries." **Marcus Aurelius**, *Meditations*, 2.2

"No man can be a lover of wisdom and a lover of the body." **Plato**, *Phaedo*, 68 C

"The body is a prison and a corpse." **Philo of Alexandria**, *De Agricultura* 5

Paul's Dialogue with the Greek Philosophers at Athens

You can imagine the **difficulty** of the apostle Paul preaching to the **Greek philosophers on Mars Hill**.

Acts 17:18:

*"Then certain Epicurean and Stoic **philosophers** encountered him. And some said, "What does this **babbler** want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods," because he preached to them Jesus and the **resurrection**."*

Acts 17:32:

*"And when they heard of the **resurrection of the dead**, some **mocked**, while others said, "We will hear you again on this matter."*

The **philosophers** could not understand how someone would **want to have a body** resurrected if the body was **evil**

The Biblical Concept of a Material Body

John 1:14: God wanting to become flesh? This was **absurd** and the epitome of **insanity** for Greek philosophy.

*“And the Word was **made flesh**, and dwelt **among us**, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”*

Luke 24:39:

*“Behold my **hands** and my **feet**, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not **flesh** and **bones**, as ye see me have.”*

I John 4:3:

*“. . . and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come **in the flesh** is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.”*

Romans 8:3:

*“For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the **likeness of sinful flesh**, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the **flesh**.”*

We are waiting for the moment when we will receive a **glorified body**

Romans 8:23: The body needs to be **redeemed**

*“Not only that, but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves **groan within ourselves**, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the **redemption of our body**.”*

Revelation 22:1, 2: There will be **matter and time** in the earth made new

*“And he showed me a pure river of **water** of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the **tree** of life, which bore twelve **fruits**, each tree yielding its fruit every **month**. The **leaves** of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”*

Isaiah 66:22, 23: There will be **time** in the earth made new

"For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain. 23 And it shall come to pass that from one **New Moon** to another, and from one **Sabbath** to another, all **flesh** shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD.

There will be time and matter but there will be **no sin**. It is **sin which leads to deteriorate matter**. Man will once again eat from the **tree of life** and live in bliss forever.

Body Redeemed from Sin

I Corinthians 15:51-54:

“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory.”

Philippians 3:20, 21:

*“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to **His glorious body**, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”*

The Flesh can be subdued by the Spirit in our Life

Romans 8:5-9:

*“For those who live according to the **flesh** set their minds on the things of **the flesh**, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be **carnally minded** is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the **carnal mind** is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are **in the flesh** cannot please God. 9 But you are not **in the flesh** but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.”*

If we allow the **Holy Spirit to mould our spirit** (character/mind) then we will receive a **new immortal** and **incorruptible** body at the resurrection.

Romans 8:11:

“But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”

Devastating Implications of the Immortality of the Soul

1 The immortality of the soul **gives to man the glory** which belongs only to God (Revelation 14:7). Immortality belongs exclusively to God as does His **omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence**.

2 The immortality of the soul makes **God a liar** (Genesis 2:16-17) and Satan a truth teller (Genesis 3:4)

3 If our soul is by nature immortal, why would **Jesus have to die** in order to give us what we already possess?
(I Corinthians 15:3)

4 If our soul is what really counts before God, then what need is there to care in a **special way for our body?**

(I Corinthians 6:19, 20; Romans 12:1)

“The body is the only medium through which the mind and the soul are developed for the upbuilding of character. Hence it is that the adversary of souls directs his temptations to the enfeebling and degrading of the physical powers. His success here means the surrender to evil of the whole being. The tendencies of our physical nature, unless under the dominion of a higher power, will surely work ruin and death.” Counsels on Diet and Foods, p. 73

5 The doctrine of the immortality of the soul leads many to put **the second coming on the backburner**. It **deemphasizes** the urgency for the second coming. After all, if our soul goes to heaven at death, **why be so concerned** about the second coming of Jesus?
(I Thessalonians 4:15-17)

6 The doctrine of the immortality of the soul **opens wide the door of the church to spiritualism**. If souls go to heaven, what would prevent them from **coming back to earth** to communicate with the living? (**Revelation 18:2-3**)

The Purpose of Spiritualistic Manifestations

Message from the purported spirit of John C. Calhoun in 1853 to N. P. Tallmadge, governor and senator from Wisconsin:

*“My friend, often the question is asked: what good can come from these manifestations? I will respond: It is to **unite mankind in harmony** and to convince skeptics of the **immortality of the soul**.”*

Remark by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle of Sherlock Holmes fame:

*“I believe that one of the ultimate results of this movement [spiritualism] will be to **unite Christianity** upon a common basis so strong and, indeed, self-sufficient that the **quibbles** which separate the churches today will be seen in their true light and proportion and will be swept away or disregarded.”*

Ellen White on the Ecumenical Implications of Spiritualism

*“The line of distinction between professed Christians and the ungodly is now hardly distinguishable. Church members love what the world loves and are ready to join with them, and Satan determines to unite **them in one body** and thus strengthen his cause by **sweeping all into the ranks of spiritualism**. **Papists**, who boast of miracles as a certain sign of the true church, will be readily deceived by this wonder-working power; and **Protestants**, having cast away the shield of truth, will also be deluded. **Papists, Protestants, and worldlings** will alike accept the form of godliness without the power, and they will see in **this union** a grand movement for the conversion of the world and the ushering in of the long-expected millennium.”* The Great Controversy, pp. 588, 589

Dare anyone say that this is not true?

- **Napoleon Hill** (Think and Grow Rich)
- **Norman Vincent Peale** (The Power of Positive Thinking)
- **Richard Bach** (Jonathan Livingston Seagull)
- **Benny Hinn** claiming to hear the voice of Kathryn Kuhlman speaking to him
- **Pat Robertson** and other saying that **OBE** or **NDE** are evidence of life after death
- Emphasis on **angels as departed spirits** (Highway to Heaven)
- Movies such as **Lord of the Rings, Harry Potter, the Sixth Sense, etc.**
- Appearances and messages from the “**Virgin Mary**”?
- Phenomenal growth of **Astrology**
- Programs on **television** where **Psychics** claim to bring messages from the dead
- Phenomenal growth of **New Age publications** and practices even in churches
- Programs such as **Highway to Heaven** or Touched by Angel

Comment from Ellen G. White in Early Writings, p. 88. This was after the Fox sisters’ episode in 1848, the origin of modern spiritualism in the United States:

*“I saw the rapidity with which this delusion was **spreading**. A train of cars was shown me, going with the speed of lightning. The angel bade me look carefully. I fixed my eyes upon the train. It seemed that the **whole world was on board**, that there could not be one left. Said the angel: ‘They are binding in bundles ready to burn.’ Then he showed me the conductor, who appeared like a stately, fair person, whom all the passengers looked up to and revered. I was perplexed and asked my attending angel who it was. He said, “It is Satan. He is the conductor in the form of an angel of light. **He has taken the world captive**. They are given over to strong delusions, to believe a lie, that they may be damned. This agent, the next highest in order to him, is the engineer, and other of his agents are employed in different offices as he may need them, and they are all going with **lightning speed to perdition**.”*

Read **Isaiah 8:19, 20** and then the following quotation from Ellen G. White:

*“He has power to bring before men the **appearance of their departed friends**. The **counterfeit is perfect**; the familiar look, the words, the tone, are reproduced with **marvelous distinctness**. Many are comforted with the assurance that their loved ones are enjoying the bliss of heaven, and without suspicion of danger, they give ear “to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.” The Great Controversy, p. 552.*

*“I saw that the saints must get a **thorough understanding** of present truth, which they will be obliged to maintain from the **Scriptures**. They must understand the **state of the dead**; for the spirits of devils will yet appear to them, professing to be **beloved friends and relatives**, who will declare to them that the Sabbath has been changed, also other unscriptural doctrines. They will do all in their power to **excite sympathy** and will work **miracles** before them to confirm what they declare.” Early Writings, p. 87.*

Explain where I got my sermon title (**Oscar Cullmann**) from and how scholars are coming over to the Seventh-day Adventist view on the state of the dead. The contrast of Jesus and Socrates—death a friend or an enemy?