

A photograph of a weathered, moss-covered gravestone in a lush green cemetery. The stone is rectangular with a rounded top and shows signs of age and neglect. It is surrounded by dense foliage, including large green leaves in the foreground and background. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, sans-serif font.

My brother DIED -  
WHERE is  
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# My brother DIED - WHERE is he NOW?

I had an internship at a hospital just before finishing my training as a physiotherapist. I had just greeted a patient and immediately could see something strange about him.

I did not know this person and did not know if he was a president, a shoe-maker or an ordinary businessman.

I took his pulse and after a few seconds, it was gone. Then and there, I realized that this man had died in my hands.

I stood there speechless and contemplative. It didn't matter what title this man had, but whether or not he had given his heart to Jesus.





These were also my exact thoughts when my brother died.

He had Parkinson's for over 20 years. He suffered very much and had almost no strength at the end of his life. He died a few days later, after having inflammation of the lungs. In such situations, there are many who ask: Where is he now? There are many other questions concerning the state of the dead that are asked, for example: Is there any consciousness, pain, knowledge, or wisdom after death? Does the whole person die or just a part with soul or spirit living on?

We realize that there are many preconceived ideas to these questions, but if we allow opinions or what we think or feel to determine our answer, there will then be many different, strange answers. The Bible has always had the same answers to these questions and therefore will allow it to speak.

## NO PORTION IN ANY THING DONE UNDER THE SUN

The wise man Solomon writes: "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun... Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." (Ecc. 9:5-6, 10).

Here we see the state of things in the grave. There is no life. The prophet Samuel writes: "The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up." (1 Sam. 2:6).

Job confirms this same truth when he says: "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave." (Job 21:13).



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The grave is the common meeting place for all people – the righteous and unrighteous. They will be there until the Lord resurrects them. So my brother is now in the grave. He is sleeping. He is dead. If we were to dig him up in two or ten years, we would see that he still is in the grave and will remain there until Jesus wakes him up, either to eternal life or eternal damnation. Of course I hope that he will be saved, but it is Jesus who decides. He knows people's hearts. The Bible's promise is the following: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." (Matt. 5:8). So if we have a clean heart, we will then be part of the redeemed when Jesus comes to gather His people. (Read about what happens before, during and after Jesus comes again in the pamphlet **THE KING IS COMING** at [www.endtime.net](http://www.endtime.net)).

We could already here come to a conclusion in this debate. But since people have so many questions, we will try to answer them. Some suggest that people either go to Heaven or to hell right after they die. Is this the case?

## **AFTER DEATH COMES JUDGMENT**

The Bible says: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb. 9:27).

Judgment takes place between the time of death and the second coming of Jesus. The Bible clearly says that we must all come before the judgment of God. It is described as follows: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5:10).

We have just read that we must all come before the judgment seat of Christ. Jesus is the judge and He is also the Saviour. He is the only one who can set us free. Jesus says: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father,

but by me." (John 14:6). Further on John writes: "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1 John 5:12). Are these words unclear? Only those who, by faith, accept Jesus Christ as Saviour inherit eternal life. All others do not receive eternal life – in torment. Those who suggest this, build upon their own theories.

## OUT OF THE GRAVES

When Jesus ascended to Heaven, He said: "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:1-3).

This verse says that Jesus went to prepare a place for us when He ascended to Heaven. It is only after Jesus comes again, that we can be together with Him in Heaven. It is first then that the redeemed will be in Heaven. Later on in this pamphlet, we will see that Jesus will create a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness dwells.

We have already seen that the dead know nothing. They have no life. They lie in the earth and rot away becoming dust again. Before Jesus comes again, there will be a judgment where Jesus decides the eternal destiny of those who have died.

Let us look at some scriptures: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John 5:28, 29).



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Here we clearly see that the dead arise from the graves. They have lain in the grave since the time of their death and the second coming of Jesus. Saved or not, they will come out of the graves. Job writes much about death and writes the following: "But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." (Job 14:10-12).

When the angel Gabriel spoke with Daniel about the resurrection, he said: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake...But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." (Daniel 12:1,13).

Paul makes the same conclusion when he talks about Jesus' second coming: "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thess. 4:15-17).

Here we see that the redeemed will arise from the graves when Jesus comes again. There will not be anybody taken up in the air before others. The dead shall arise from the graves first and the living saints will together with them, be taken up in the air to meet the Lord (in the air). They shall not meet the Lord on the ground but in the air. It is then that the redeemed will first go to Heaven, where Jesus has prepared a place for them.

We also have the story of Lazarus, Jesus' friend. He had been in the grave for several days and began to smell. Jesus said: "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." (John 11:11-14).

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(John 5:28, 29)*



Think about this text for a minute. Jesus says that Lazarus sleepeth – Lazarus is dead. Jesus then said to Lazarus, who was in the grave: "Lazarus, come forth." (John 11:43).

He did not say: "Soul or spirit, come down from Heaven or out from hell and into Lazarus." No, He called Lazarus out of the grave. The dead remain in the grave until Jesus comes again.

How can the dead live again? Jesus says: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." (Rev. 1:18). Jesus will awaken the dead from the grave at His second coming. The redeemed, the dead in Christ, will be changed when Jesus awakens them from the graves. Paul describes this event as follows: "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an



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1:18)*

eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." (1 Cor. 15:51-54). The redeemed will receive a glorified body allowing them to see God and live. Not one of us now can see God and live. This will also be the case for the ungodly when Jesus comes again. Jesus will come as King of kings and Lord of lords and the ungodly will not be able to see Him and live. The Bible describes this event as follows: "And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6:14-16).



*Two things must be in place in order to have light: a light bulb and electricity. Likewise, without the combination of body and breath, there would not exist a living soul.*

## BODY AND BREATH OF LIFE

We have already read many scriptures that very clearly say that the dead lie in the grave until Jesus awakens them. Nonetheless, people have doubts and ask themselves many questions. Some suggest that it is an immortal spirit, or soul, that comes out of a person when they die. The Bible says: "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Genesis 2:7). Man became a living soul (a living person). A soul, or person, is always a combination of two things: body and breath of life. A soul, or person, cannot exist without the combination of body and breath/spirit. With this, the Bible is saying that a person is a whole and not divided. The question is: Who will live and who will die? We have already seen that those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour by faith, have gone from death to life. (See Rom. 6:23). The Bible also says: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Eze. 18:20). Here, a person is referred to as a soul. So a person, or soul, dies. People are mortal and only God is immortal (more on this later).

What happens when a person dies? The wise man Solomon says, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." (Ecc. 12:7). Does this scripture say anything about where the soul goes when a person dies? No. The spirit (breath of life) goes back to God who gave it, but the soul ceases to exist. We have already seen that there must be a body and



spirit/breath present in order for a person to live. When the breath/spirit is gone, the body then stops functioning. When you turn off the lights, where does the light go? It does not go anywhere. It just ceases to exist. Two things must be in place in order to have light: a light bulb and electricity. There is no light without this combination. It is just like this with the body. Without the combination of body and breath/spirit, there would not exist a living soul/person. The same breath of life that God breathed in man's nostrils when He created him returns back to God who gave it, whether the person who dies is righteous or unrighteous.

This point is important to understand, so let us take another look at it. Since the breath of life makes man a living soul, what would man be without the breath of life? The answer is simple: Man would be an unconscious being without the breath of life; man becomes dust when he dies. The Bible does not say that a part of man continues to live on as a soul or spirit when the breath of life is taken away. When man dies, the whole being dies. There is nobody who goes to either hell or Heaven when they die.

We have seen that judgment takes place between the time of death and Jesus' second coming. It is in this judgment, that Jesus determines whether a person will inherit eternal life or eternal damnation. Jesus is judge and he decides the degree of punishment the ungodly will receive. Jesus is a righteous and just judge! A person lies in the grave until Jesus has determined their destiny. (Acts 5:28-29).

## MORTAL OR IMMORTAL

Moses writes: "The life is in the blood". (Lev. 17:10-11 & Deut. 12:23). When a person dies, that which is in the blood also dies. There are no more oxygen or life-giving particles remaining in the blood. Everything dies.

When Jesus died on the cross, a soldier pierced His side with a spear and out came water and blood. This is a sign that a person is dead. Was Jesus taken to Heaven? No. Three days after His death, Jesus Himself said to Maria on the resurrection morning: "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father." (John 20:17).

Furthermore, the Bible says with all clarity, that God alone is immortal: "Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality." (1 Tim. 6:15-16). God alone has immortality. Man is mortal, but we have read that when Jesus comes again, the redeemed will be clothed with immortality. This takes place at the return of Jesus, but not now.

The teaching of the immortality of the soul has existed ever since the Creation. God had said that Adam and Eve would die if they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17). Satan contradicted God by saying: "Ye shall not surely die." (Gen. 3:4). This is the foundation for spiritism – the teaching of



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*(Genesis 2:7)*

the immortality of the soul. They believe that it is a soul, or spirit, that is released from a person when they die and floats around influencing people and is able to communicate messages. In a spiritist magazine, they write the following: "What is Spiritism? Spiritism is the belief that the spirit outlives the body and can have contact with living people through people we call mediums." (Paraphrased from *Spiritisten*, a Danish spiritist magazine, 1900, p. 84).

Almost half of all people on earth believe in reincarnation – the teaching that says that the soul never dies, but continues to be born again in different bodies from one generation to another. Such a teaching does not harmonize with the teaching of the Bible. The Bible says, that man becomes dust again after death (Ps. 104:29), the dead know nothing (Ecc. 9:5), the dead have no mental power (Ps. 146:4), the dead have no part in that which takes place on earth (Ecc. 9:6), the dead are no longer alive (2 Kings 20:1), the dead wait in the grave (Job 17:13), and that the dead live no longer (Job 14:1, 2).

We have already seen through many scriptures that the Bible takes a full stand against the theory of the immortality of the soul, reincarnation, communication with the dead, channeling, and other similar practices. The Bible calls such teachings and practices an abomination. We read: "There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch. Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee." (Deut. 18:10-12).

The Devil/Satan takes advantage of the unknown. He deceives people through the teaching of the immortality of the soul. He reveals himself through this teaching and gets people to believe that there is life after death. He deceives people through things such as supernatural experiences, UFOs, trolls, elves (very common

in Scandinavia), and other similar strange creatures. Satan reveals himself as people from the dead. He works through fortune-tellers in revealing and explaining fortunate as well as unfortunate occurrences in the past, present and future. He helps his human agents to see and warn about natural disasters. He helps them in the practice of spiritism and communication with the dead. The Bible says that all who practice and teach such things are an abomination to the Lord. It does not matter if they are princesses or kings, presidents or have any other fine titles or positions. The Bible reveals that they are agents of the Devil if they continue to be involved with such spiritualistic abominations.

## SATAN'S DECEPTION

The Bible warns against the Devil's deceptions at the end of time. The Bible says he goes around as a roaring lion seeking those he may devour knowing he has but a short time. (Rev. 12:12). The Bible also says that there will be great deception carried out by deceiving powers at the end of time. The world powers at the end of time are presented in the Bible as the Dragon, the Beast and the False Prophet. The Bible reveals that it is spirits of devils who work signs and wonders and are behind these deceiving world powers, which go out to deceive the kings of the earth and to gather them together in war against God and those who stand in His



*The serpent said to the woman: "Ye shall not surely die."  
(Gen. 3:4)*

side. We read: "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." (Rev. 16:13-14; See also Rev. 13:12-14; 17:12-14). People will be deceived by signs and wonders. The kings of the earth will also be deceived by these spirits of devils. This is the word of the Lord and should therefore be aware, as many admire and look up to royal families, political and religious leaders. When the leaders accept these deceptions, they then give signals to the people through the media. In this way, ordinary individuals will also easily be deceived. Unfortunately, this is what is going to happen! Nonetheless, there will be a remnant that will not be deceived. May you and I be among them!

In addition to what we just have read, the Bible in many places confirms Satan's deceptions through signs and wonders. Jesus says: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. 7:21-23). Later on, Jesus warns His disciples and us as well: "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." (Matt. 24:24).

Here is one additional text that speaks about Satan's powerful deceptions at the end of time: "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." (2 Thess. 2:9-10).

We have just read that the spirits of devils will deceive people through signs and wonders. We of course believe that Jesus can also perform miracles through his faithful people—through "whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them." (Matt. 7:24). The Bible also says: "And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." (Acts 5:32). Be aware—Satan can perform miracles as well. Sad to say but Satan and his angels will deceive the majority. Satan will also use people as co-workers in his service. Paul describes the deceived co-workers as follows: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

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Satan will transform himself into an angel of light. Even more shocking, he will impersonate Jesus. (Matt. 24:23-24). Deception will be great. Those who believe that the dead are living in same way, shape or form, will very likely be deceived. Dead souls are not living. The Bible has revealed this very clearly. Why should we, then, continue to listen to the priest and preacher who hold fast to this unbiblical teaching about the immortality of the soul? It is Satan who materializes himself as the dead (and animals) and who also conveys both true and false messages when someone communicates with the dead. Believe only in God's Word and not the spirits of devils! Those who were mediums in the time of Moses were stoned (Lev. 20:27). This shows how God looks upon this false and unbiblical teaching that the dead are living.



*"Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light."  
(2 Cor. 11:13)*

Is it your intention to just ignore these warnings or are you beginning to understand that we must now, more than ever, cling to Jesus in order to receive help against Satan's deceptions, lies, signs and wonders? Only those who search the Scriptures and follow what they say, in love and closeness to the Saviour, will succeed in staying on the straight and narrow path that leads to the Kingdom of God. (Matt. 24:24-27; Luke 6:47-49).

## THE TEACHING OF ETERNAL TORMENT

The teaching of eternal torment is also an unbiblical teaching. We have seen that the dead lie in the grave until Jesus comes again and that judgment takes place between the time of death and Jesus' second coming. It is true that the Bible says that the ungodly will receive an eternal punishment, but the word eternal comes from the original Greek text Aion, which means, "long time", "lifetime", and "eternity". The Bible says that the ungodly will be punished according to their works. It reads: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is



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the second death." (Rev. 20:12-14). Jesus says: "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." (Rev. 22:12). The prophet Malachi says: "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." (Mal. 4:1). The root to evil is the Devil and Satan and the branches are the ungodly. They will burn together. They will burn as straw. Long, moist straw burns a long time, but short, dry straw burns only a short while. This illustrates how the ungodly will be punished. They will be punished according to their works and will end with their death. Some receive greater punishment while others receive lesser punishment. The punishment is not now in hell, but the punishment is now being determined in the heavenly courts before Jesus comes again. The prophet Malachi not only says that the ungodly will burn as straw, but that they will also become ashes (verse 3).

On the isle of Patmos, the Lord showed John what would happen to the ungodly. He writes: "And they (Satan, his evil angels and the ungodly) went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." (Rev. 20:9). Here, we read that Satan and all who have sided with him will be

devoured in the lake of fire. They will be burned up and turn to ashes. The fire will be unquenchable. (Matt. 3:12). An unquenchable fire is a fire that cannot be stopped, but is extinguished when all have received their calculated punishment and everything is burned up. This is how it was with the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. They burned with unquenchable fire, but the fire was extinguished when there was nothing left to be burned. The Bible reads: "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." (Jude 7). It says that the cities and those who lived therein should be burned with eternal fire. This was their punishment for their immorality. We know that these cities are not burning today. The fire was quenched when all was burned up. Everything turned to ashes. That which took place in Sodom and Gomorrah is an example of what will take place in the future, says the apostle Peter. The Bible reads: "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly." (2 Pet. 2:6).

How big will the fire be when the earth and all that is therein shall burn? The apostle Peter writes: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (2 Pet. 3:10). The fire will be so intense that everything in the earth will melt. It will be burned up. We read that the heavens and the elements will also melt and burn up. This is telling us that the atmosphere surrounding the earth will also melt because of the fire. This must be the case in order for God to create a new heaven and a new earth.

John writes: "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." (Rev. 20:14). Later on John says: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." (Rev. 21:8). Again, John writes: "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." (Rev. 20:15). Paul writes: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:23). The ungodly will receive their punishment in the lake of fire and will end with death. Jesus will destroy the life and the body in the lake of fire (hell).

If the ungodly, as some preach, should burn in hell eternally, they would then be immortal. But this is not possible because we have already seen that it is only God who has immortality (1 Tim. 6:16). When Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden of Eden, there was an angel who guarded the tree of life so that they would not eat of it. The Bible reads: "Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden



*"For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." (Mal. 4:1)*

of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." (Gen. 3:23, 24).

If Adam and Eve would have eaten of the tree of LIFE, they would have lived eternally in sin, but this was not allowed. We have also seen that man first receives immortality when Jesus comes again in the clouds of heaven (1 Cor. 15:51-54). The teaching of the immortality of the soul and the torment of sinners, for thousands and millions of years, does not come from God but from Satan. God prevented an eternal life in sin by sending his angel to guard the tree of life.

The Devil will also receive his punishment—the longest punishment in the lake of fire. He is the originator of all suffering here on earth. The Bible says that he goes around as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. (Rev. 12:12). The Devil will receive a just punishment in the lake of fire. Jesus is the judge and determines the punishment. Satan's ultimate punishment is described as follows: "Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more." (Eze. 28:18-19).

Here we see that Satan will be devoured in the lake of fire. He will, just as the ungodly, be turned to ashes. He will not exist anymore throughout eternity. When the Bible is so clear, why should those who acknowledge Biblical teaching continue to hold fast to the teaching of the immortality of the soul and eternal torment? This is a terrible, false teaching, having no biblical roots, which comes from heathenism and Catholicism. These erroneous teachings do not harmonize with the love of the Jesus either.



## THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

There are still some who will not let go of their eternal torment theory and that the soul is immortal. Jesus' parable about the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31 is used by some to support the teaching of the immortality of the soul. In the parable, Lazarus, a beggar, is laid at the gate of the rich man. He is full of sores and hungry, desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. The rich man does not care about Lazarus, who eventually dies because of his suffering. The angels carry Lazarus up to Abraham's bosom. A short time after, the rich man also dies and finds himself in hell plagued by fire. He then sees Abraham and Lazarus afar off and asks Abraham to send Lazarus to his family and warn his five brothers so that they will not end up in the same place of torment.

It does not actually say in the story that it is a parable, but the Bible says: "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them." (Matt. 13:34). So it is a parable.

The story about the rich man and Lazarus follows a succession of parables, including the lost sheep, the lost coin, the prodigal son, the unfaithful steward, the leaven, etc. All of these stories are parables that convey a message through symbolic language. When dealing with parables, we cannot take all the details literally and build fundamental teachings/doctrines on such a foundation. The parables are usually meant to give practical illustrations concerning character development, the life of faith, salvation, etc.

If the parable of the rich man and Lazarus was an actual event, with literal content, we would be witnesses to a strange scenario with many problems. We can ask ourselves questions like:



*In the parable, Lazarus, a beggar, is laid at the gate of the rich man. He is full of sores and hungry, desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. The rich man does not care about Lazarus, who eventually dies because of his suffering.*

- Is there a continual communication between heaven and hell?
- Will heaven be a happy place if the redeemed continually should be witnesses to their lost friends' suffering?
- What picture does this understanding give of God? Is He heartless and non-caring, more than earthly tyrants?
- Will He torture His 'enemies' through all eternity?
- Can a few drops of water alleviate pain while in a lake of fire?
- Do the redeemed find themselves in Abraham's bosom?

The parable is filled with symbolic language, something that is usually difficult when dealing with parables. If we were to take all the Bible's parables literally, we would then have a strange picture of reality where trees talk, for example. (Judges 9:8-15). Everything suggests that this story is a parable. It was not Jesus' intention to give a theological discourse on the state of the dead and hell. It was a parable that was intended to awaken the prideful Jews to an understanding as to what really matters in this life – and what counts as having eternal value. It was a common perception that if you were a Jew, and, on top of that, were wealthy and in good health, then this showed that God's blessing was upon you. Poverty and sickness was seen by many as a curse, as God's displeasure. Through the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus turns this perception upside down. It was a poor and suffering Lazarus that experienced bliss.

We cannot obtain salvation through inheritance or through material and social status. As in other parables, Jesus places weight on enduring values such as brotherly love, sympathy and caring for others.

Let us more specifically see some points we can get out of this parable:

1. There was a gulf between the rich man and Lazarus. What can this gulf represent? The parable makes it clear that it is in this life that we determine our eternal destiny and that it does not work to place trust in a new chance at the end of life. When life is over, God will judge us according to how our life has been. We have read that "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb. 9:27). It is now we must choose to receive the gift of salvation. When life is over, it is not possible to change our mind. You will either end up on the one side or the other side of "the gulf". You will either be saved or you will be lost. When life is over, it is not possible to move from one side to the other.

In the parable, this "gulf" can also teach us something about character development and obedience.



*We cannot obtain salvation through inheritance or through material and social status. Jesus emphasizes values like brotherly love, sympathy and care.*



Lazarus represents the poor and suffering that believe in Christ. When the trumpet sounds, all who are in the graves will hear the voice of Christ and come forth to receive their reward (1 Thess. 4:15-17). Lazarus means "God is my comfort". Those who have made God their comfort are in the best position, even though they may go through many trials here on earth. The gulf in this story can be symbolic of the differences in character and obedience between the redeemed and the lost.

The Bible says that the Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance, against such there is no law. Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with all its affections and lusts. As we live in the Spirit, let then us also walk in the Spirit! (Gal. 5:22-25). It is obvious that the Fruit of the Spirit was not present in the rich man's life. He had not crucified the flesh and its lusts. He followed his own self; his own ego and therefore the Spirit could not come into his life. What about you? Do you desire to let the natural tendencies/passions run wild and live out worldly lusts and sin? If you do so and do not repent, you will go down to the grave with a sinful heart in disobedience to the way of the Lord. You will also have a defective character that will not allow you to be part of the resurrection of the righteous. When God's voice awakens the unrighteous dead from the grave at the end of the world - the second resurrection - they will arise from the grave with the same lusts and passions, and the same likes and dislikes they fostered when alive. It is only the righteous in Christ that are changed at the resurrection of the saved. (1 Cor. 15:51-54). God does not perform some kind of miracle to recreate a person who, when the opportunities were fully present and everything just perfect, did not desire not be recreated or born again. As long as he lived, he found no joy in God or in service for Him.

His character is just not in harmony with God and it is basically impossible for him to find happiness in the Heavenly family. May you and I learn from this and now choose to be obedient to the Lord. We can, then, be found on the right side of the gulf – in the eternal kingdom where we shall inherit all things. (Rev. 21:7).

The rich man was not nice to the poor man. He pleased himself with his luxuries, big feasts and good food. When Jesus comes again, He will say to His faithful servants: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matt. 25:34-40).

Jesus said: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." He did not say: That which you have done toward the greatest or the best, but toward the least. Lazarus is presented as the least in the parable. It is clear that the rich man was not so nice to Lazarus. Could it therefore be the reason he missed out on eternal life?

2. In the parable, the rich man cries out to Abraham for help: "Father Abraham, have mercy on me." (Luke 16:24). He cried out not to God but to Abraham. This showed that he placed Abraham before God as well as being proud of his relationship to Abraham instead of God. The thief on the cross directed his prayer to Christ. We should also do this to receive help in time of need: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as

*"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me...."*

*(Matt. 25, 34-36)*



we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4:15, 16).

3. In the parable, the rich man wanted Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his five brothers, through a miracle, so that they could believe and not end up in the same painful place as the rich man. In the parable, Abraham answers: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." (Luke 16:31).

The law and the prophets are resources chosen by God for the salvation of souls: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). If people do not listen to God's voice, just as it is found in the Word, they will still not listen even though one resurrected from the dead. Those who align themselves after Moses and the prophets will not demand greater light than that which God has given them while living here on earth. If people reject the light and do not appreciate the opportunities given to them, they will neither accept a message from one resurrected from the dead. Such an event would not be powerful enough to convince them. The point is: Those who reject the law and the prophets have thereby hardened their hearts to such a degree that they will reject all light.

Today, people want miracles and not God's Word. They do not believe in Moses and the prophets. They will therefore not believe in God's Word even though one resurrected from the dead to tell about Moses and the prophets. Today, the majority who profess to be Christians have an appearance of godliness but deny the power thereof—the power to have victory over sin. (2 Tim. 3:1-5). It is while we are alive that we must believe Moses, the prophets and God's Word. It is clear that this was a word to the Jews who received the opportunity to hear the Word of God first but rejected the Saviour and chose Barabbas. The Jews boasted about their blood relationship to Abraham, but it does not help to have Abraham's blood if they do not have the faith and works of Abraham. Jesus said to them that they did not bear the Fruit of the Spirit (Matt. 21:18-19, 43). The spiritual relation to Abraham is revealed only through obedience to God's voice and we must reveal this while we are now living! The Holy Spirit will help us with this!



*Today, people want miracles  
and not God's Word.*



*Think about Christ... He preached the good news, helped the weak and sick - and many accepted the faith.*

4. It looks like this parable was intended for the Jewish nation as to reveal to them something about themselves. When Christ presented this parable of the rich man and Lazarus, many among the Jewish people found themselves in the exact position as the rich man. They used the Lord's wealth and riches to please themselves. All was in place for them to receive the destiny-determining judgment: "Weighed in the balances, and found wanting." (Dan. 5:27). The rich man had been favoured with all material and spiritual blessings, but he denied cooperating with God by wasting these blessings. This was also the case with the Jewish nation. The Jews were God's entrusted stewards of eternal truths. (Acts 13:45, 46). He had chosen them to be stewards of His grace. He had given them every spiritual and material advantage. He had called them to pass these blessings on to others. They had received good instruction as to how they were to treat their brother in need, the stranger within their gates and the poor among them. They were not to seek their own good but were to remember the poor and needy and share with them. God promised to bless them in proportion to the love and mercy they practiced everyday, but they resembled the rich man. They did not reach out with a helping hand to alleviate the material and spiritual needs among the suffering. They went about full of pride and praised themselves in being God's chosen people. But by no means whatsoever, did they worship God. They placed all their trust in that they were children of Abraham: "We be Abraham's seed." (John 8:33). When the crisis came, it was revealed that they had separated themselves from God. They had placed their trust

in Abraham as if he was their God. Christ longs to let His light shine in the darkened mind of the Jewish nation. He said to them: "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham." (John 8:39, 40). Think about Christ's disciples who went around doing good. They preached about Jesus' resurrection, His love and the message of grace. They helped the weak, the sick and many accepted the faith: "And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:5-12).

The Jewish leaders should have appreciated the fact that Jesus and the disciples helped people on the physical and spiritual levels, but they didn't. They put the disciples in prison and in the end, gave their approval to murder Jesus, our Saviour. Do you not see the Jews' attitude reflected in the rich man?

5. The rich man in the parable had a body, eyes, tongue and fingers, but we have seen that the body does not go to hell at death. God's Word tells us that the dead lie in the grave. (John 5:28, 29).

6. The redeemed are rewarded when Jesus comes again and not when they die. (Rev. 21:11- 12). There is a judgment between the time of death and the second coming of Jesus (Heb. 9:27).

It does not actually say in the story that it is a parable, but the Bible says: "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them." (Matt. 13:34). So it is a parable.

We believe these are some of the teachings Jesus wants us to get out of the parable. Parables cannot be understood in a literal way. If we take the parable literally, we must also, then, believe that trees speak, stones cry out, etc. (see the parable in Judges 9:8-15). This parable does not deal with the immortality of the soul or eternal torment but rather with life. It deals with issues while we are alive, about character development, about obedience to the Lord, about how we use time and what the result will be.

## PREACHED TO THE DISOBEDIENT IN NOAH'S TIME

We now come to the verses found in 1 Peter 3:18-20: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."

This scripture text is often used as proof to show that Jesus preached to the spirits while He was in the underworld. Many also suggest that this parable teaches that conversion can take place after death. But why would Jesus preach to those in the grave or to those in hell? We have already seen that the dead know not anything, they have no knowledge or understanding, and have no part in that which is done under the sun. They sleep in the grave. They are dead. (Ecc. 9:5,6,10). If we as people are to be converted, it must then take place while we are alive – before we die. When we die, are destiny is then determined.

When we come across a scripture text, which can at first glance be confusing, it is important to compare it with other similar scripture texts that can shed light on the subject. There are two other sections in the New Testament that have strong similarities with verses from 1 Peter chapter 3, but they bring out details that give a more complete and clearer picture. Let us take a look at these two sections before we come to a conclusion:

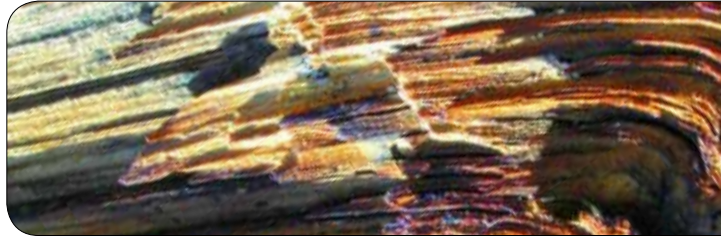


*We have already seen that the dead know not anything, they have no knowledge or understanding, and have no part in that which is done under the sun. They sleep in the grave. They are dead. (Ecc. 9:5,6,10)*





*Did Jesus  
preach to the  
spirits while  
He was in the  
underworld?*



“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast [them] down to hell, and delivered [them] into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; and spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth [person], a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned [them] with an overthrow, making [them] an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly.” 2 Peter 2:4-6

In the book of Jude, we read about angels that are chained under darkness: “And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” Jude 1:6,7

The section in Peter's first epistle talks about “the spirits in prison”. In his second epistle, Peter talks about “the angels that sinned and delivered into chains of darkness”. The book of Jude also refers to “angels which kept not their first estate” and “reserved in everlasting chains unto judgment”. In Peter's first epistle, the death and resurrection of Jesus are talked about. He says that Jesus died in the flesh, quickened by the Spirit and preached to the spirits in prison. Here we have the death and resurrection of Jesus and how Jesus preached to the spirits in prison at the time of his resurrection. In which way did Jesus preach to the fallen angels at the time of His resurrection? The resurrection was indeed a determining



*Through His resurrection, Jesus rebuked the powers of darkness and proved that the Lord of Life could break the bonds of death and set the captives free.*

event in the spiritual battle. Jesus showed, through His resurrection, that the hope which earlier preachers had preached, had now been fulfilled by His death on the cross and His resurrection. The powers of darkness did not want to accept it, but through His resurrection, Jesus rebuked the powers of darkness and proved that the Lord of Life could break the bonds of death and set the captives free. Noah's ark was a symbol of the salvation Jesus offers through the merits of His sacrifice on the cross and resurrection. The flood, as well as Sodom and Gomorra's destruction, represents the loss and destruction that will be a reality for Lucifer, the fallen angels and all who have chosen to be on his side.

The sum of God's Word is truth. One cannot build their faith only upon one or two somewhat difficult to understand passages when studying a topic. All can see in this pamphlet that we have many Bible passages that say death is sleep and that the dead lie in the grave until Jesus awakens them on the resurrection day. All see this truth as the common denominator throughout all the texts we have used. The Bible does not contradict itself and even though one may find a sentence or a verse that can be somewhat difficult to understand, it is important to keep this in mind in light of all the other clear Bible passages. In this way, one will arrive to the truth. Jesus says: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (John 17:17).

## CONCLUSION

The Bible says that when the ungodly have received their punishment, God will create a new heaven and a new earth. The apostle Peter writes about this: "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." (2 Pet. 3:13, 14). John also writes about it: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." (Rev. 21:1). We ask those who continue to hold fast to their theory of eternal torment: Where is hell when the first earth is gone and the sea is no more? It is not on earth because all the elements and everything on earth have burned up. Every trace of evil is gone. Affliction shall not rise up the second time. It would ruin the righteous' existence and God has foreseen this. Therefore will all evil be burned up and destroyed, gone for eternity.

When all the evil is gone, God will then create a new heaven and a new earth. Everything will be peaceful and good. God will bring man back to the state of things as they were in the Garden of Eden before the fall, when they could talk face to face with God. There will be no thieves, no backbiters, no Jesuits, no secret societies, no murderers, no wars, and no sorrow nor pain on the new earth. The Bible describes the existence upon the new earth as follows: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." (Rev. 21:4). If it were the case that the ungodly were to live in eternal torment, they would, then, have no place in the old earth because it is no more. They would neither have place in the new earth since there is no pain, sorrow or torment there. Only the righteous will live on the new earth. May all who read this, accept salvation in Jesus Christ and pray for the Holy Spirit's power to be Jesus' true witnesses and be among them Jesus calls His own.

With friendly greetings,

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