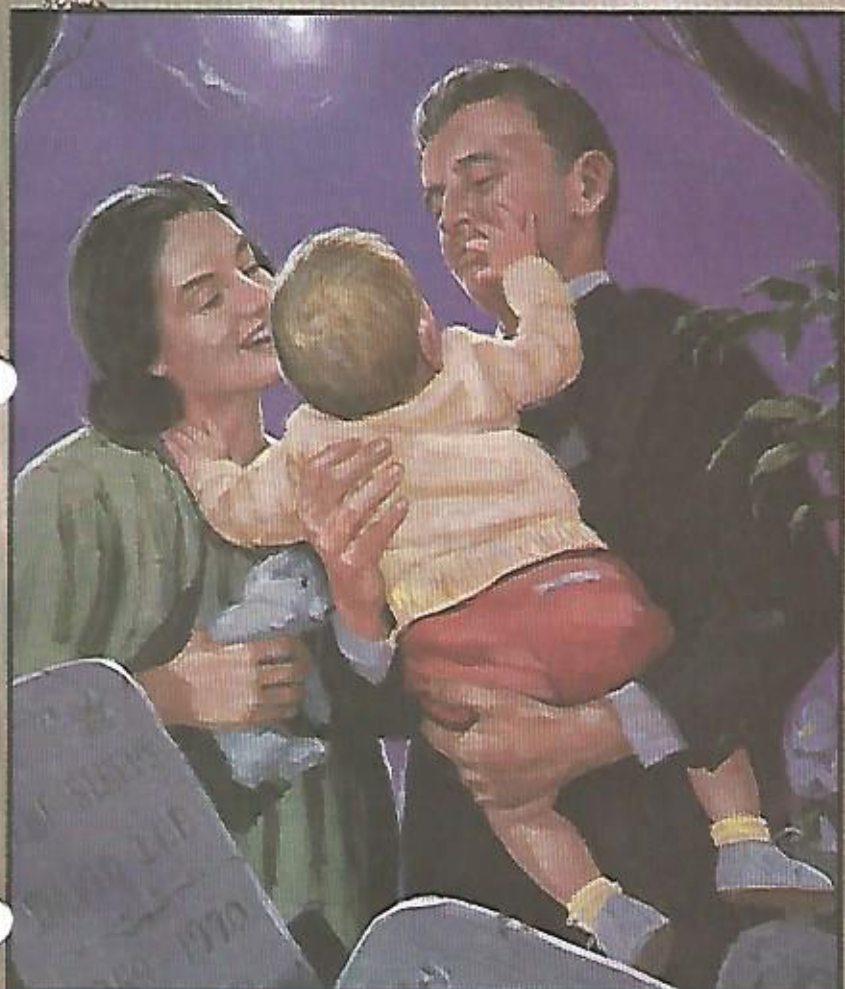




PROPHECY SEMINAR



WHEN DANIEL GOES TO HEAVEN



The last few lessons have talked extensively about the judgment. We have looked at the three phases of the judgment:

1. The pre-advent judgment of the righteous (1844 to the second coming of Christ).
2. The judgment of the wicked during the 1000 years.
3. The execution of the judgment at the end of the 1000 years.

Obviously, judgment is necessary before rewards or punishments can be meted out. The reward for the righteous is everlasting life, while the reward of the wicked is eternal death (Matthew 25:31-41) (962) [973]. This may have posed a conflict in some peoples' minds. If, as Daniel teaches, the judgment of the righteous does not begin until 1844, how can the righteous receive their reward and go to heaven when they die? Likewise, if the wicked are not judged till the 1000 years, how can they go to hell when they die, since they have not yet been to judgment?

The judgment concept in Daniel obviously raises the related question of what happens to a person at death. Therefore, it is important that we take the next two lessons to examine what the Bible says on the subject of death and the punishment of the wicked. To be consistent with Scripture, our understanding of death must be in harmony with the concept of the judgment that we have discovered in Daniel.

There are two basic teachings in Christendom concerning death. The first suggests that when righteous people die, they go straight to heaven because they have an immortal soul. Thus, they receive everlasting life immediately upon death. When wicked people die, they go straight to hell and spend eternity burning there.

The second teaching suggests that when people die, they go into the grave and sleep, and know nothing until the resurrection. At that time, they are resurrected and given immortality. Likewise, the wicked are resurrected at the end of the 1000 years to receive their punishment.

A careful examination of both teachings reveals that the second concept is in beautiful harmony with Daniel's perception of the judgment, whereas the first teaching presents a dramatic conflict with Scripture. Since Scripture is always in total agreement, the second concept would seem to be the most logical choice for the Scriptural concept of death. To be certain, let's carefully examine what Daniel and the rest of Scripture say about death.

DANIEL'S CONCEPT OF DEATH

1. **What was Daniel told he would do after he died? Daniel 12:13 (872) [871].**

"For you shall _____."

2. **When would Daniel be resurrected? Daniel 12:13 (872) [871].**

"will arise to your inheritance at the _____ of the _____."

NOTE: Daniel is clearly told in this verse that he is to rest from his labors until the end of the days. At the end of all of these prophetic time periods, at the second coming of Christ, he would stand in his lot and be resurrected with everyone else. Clearly, Daniel did not expect to go to heaven until the second coming of Christ.

- 3. What word does Daniel use to describe people who have died? Daniel 12:2 (871) [871].**

"Many of those who _____ in the dust of the earth."

NOTE: To Daniel, death was like going to bed at night and sleeping. The next thing a person knows after death is the morning of the resurrection.

- 4. According to Daniel, when do the righteous and the wicked receive their reward or punishment? Daniel 12:2 (871) [871].**

"Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall _____, some to everlasting _____, some to shame and everlasting _____."

NOTE: Daniel's point is that people awaken (are resurrected) to either eternal life or eternal damnation at the resurrection, not when they die.

THE RESURRECTION HOPE

- 5. How important is the resurrection hope to Christianity? 1 Corinthians 15:13-17 (1109) [1136-1137].**

"But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is _____. And if Christ is not risen, . . . your faith is also _____. . . you are still in your _____!"

- 6. If there is no resurrection, what has happened to people who have died? 1 Corinthians 15:18 (1109) [1137].**

"Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have _____."

NOTE: Note Paul's point clearly. If there is no resurrection, there is no afterlife. The only way to life everlasting is through the resurrection. In fact, Paul knows of no everlasting life except through the resurrection, for it is one of the most essential, pivotal doctrines of the Christian faith. Without it, there could virtually be no Christianity. The doctrine of the resurrection is one of the unique doctrines of the Christian faith. No religion but Christianity teaches the resurrection of the dead. The removal of this teaching from the Christian faith would virtually destroy Christianity. Yet, if people went to heaven at death, why would there

have to be a resurrection? The teaching that suggests that when people die they go straight to heaven destroys the need for the most essential of Christian doctrines, the doctrine of the resurrection.

7. Why is Jesus coming the second time? John 14:1-3 (1042) [1063].

"I will come again and receive you to _____; that where I am, there _____ may _____ also."

NOTE: Jesus states categorically that the reason He comes back the second time is to take His people to His Father's house. Why would Jesus come back the second time to take His people to His Father's house if they immediately went there when they died? Not only does the teaching of consciousness immediately after death destroy the doctrine of the resurrection, but it also destroys any need for the doctrine of the second coming of Christ.

IS THE SOUL MORTAL OR IMMORTAL?

Proponents of the teaching that when people die they go straight to heaven suggest that every person is born with an immortal soul. They teach that while the body dies and goes into the ground, the soul goes back to God, and therefore, the resurrection is necessary to reunite the soul with the body. Therefore, the question must be very clear in our minds: does man have an immortal soul?

The term "immortal soul" was very popular in the ancient world. The pagan Egyptians, the pagan Greeks and the pagan Romans all taught the concept and used the terminology "immortal soul." The only religious literature from the ancient world that does not use the terminology and the concept of the immortal soul is the Bible. Doesn't it seem strange that the Bible never uses the term or the concept of the immortal soul if the Bible teaches the immortality of the soul?

8. The adjective "immortal" is used only one time in the Bible. Who does this text describe as immortal? 1 Timothy 1:17 (1140) [1172].

NOTE: This is the only time in the entire Bible that the adjective "immortal" is used, and it refers to God.

9. Who does the Bible say is the only One who possesses immortality? 1 Timothy 6:15, 16 (1142) [1175].

NOTE: If God is the only one possessing immortality, how can any person claim to have an immortal soul?

10. How does the Bible define the soul? Genesis 2:7 (2) [2].

"God formed man of the _____ of the _____,
and breathed into his nostrils the _____ of
_____ ; and man became a _____ being."

NOTE: The King James Version says, "Man became a living soul". It is clear that when God created man, He united the body (the dust of the ground) with the breath of life (spirit). When these two elements became united, man **became** a living being (KJV - soul). Please note that the Bible says that the body is part of the being (KJV - soul). The soul (KJV) is not a part of the body. The soul (KJV) is the whole being (NKJV, NIV) of a person, rather than a separate entity entombed in the body. To illustrate: An electrical light consists of two elements. There is a filament in a bulb that is connected to a power source. As long as the power is connected to the filament in the bulb, you have light. When you disconnect the power source, does the light travel back through the wires to the electric company? No! The light ceases to exist. The light only has existence when it is united with the power source. Likewise, the body only has life when it is connected to the breath of life given by God, the power source.



11. Can the soul die? Ezekiel 18:20 (817, 818) [816].

"The soul who sins _____."

NOTE: Since all souls have sinned (Romans 3:23) (1087) [1112], all souls must die. Therefore, there can be no such thing as an immortal soul.

12. The word "immortal" means "not subject to death". When do Christians receive immortality? I Corinthians 15:51-54 (1110) [1138].

At the _____ trumpet, which is at the _____ coming of Jesus.

NOTE: The righteous do not receive immortality when they die. They are not born with it. They receive it from God at the second coming.

13. Why did God send His Son? John 3:16 (1027) [1046].

To give us _____ life.

NOTE: The reason Jesus died on the cross was to give us everlasting life and immortality. If every person is born with an immortal soul, there would have been no need for Jesus Christ to come and die on the cross. If people went straight to heaven when they died because their soul was eternal and immortal, there would be absolutely no need for the cross of Jesus Christ. Jesus died so we could receive immortality at His second coming.

Amazing, friend! Think of it! This one teaching that says that when a person dies he goes straight to heaven destroys the need for the doctrine of the resurrection, the second coming and the cross. Once these three great pillars of the Christian faith are destroyed or undermined, there is simply no need of Christianity. By introducing the concept of the immortal soul into the Christian church from pagan religion, Satan has virtually undermined the uniqueness of Christianity.

WHERE ARE THE DEAD NOW?

What happens, then, to people in the interval between death and the resurrection? Let's discover what the Bible says about this period of time.

14. How did Jesus refer to death? John 11:11 (1038) [1059].

"Our friend Lazarus _____."

NOTE: The Biblical term for death is "sleep", and is used 66 times in Scripture (See Exhibit 1.) The only hope that Jesus held out to Mary and Martha (John 11:25, 26) (1039) [1059] was the resurrection hope. Jesus never tried to assure them that Lazarus was enjoying the bliss of heaven while he was dead, but He held out to them the great resurrection hope.



15. Do people praise God when they are dead? Psalm 6:5 (516) [540].

NOTE: Could you imagine people being in heaven and not remembering God or praising Him?

16. What happens to people's plans on the very day that they die? Psalm 146:3, 4 (601) [617].

They _____.

NOTE: Could you imagine anyone being in heaven with no thoughts?

17. How much does a person know when he's dead? Ecclesiastes 9:5 (644) [655].

"The dead know _____."

NOTE: Could anything be clearer than this verse? The wise man, Solomon, declares that the **dead know nothing**. Nowhere does the Bible say anything about people going to heaven at death. (For information on the thief on the cross, see Exhibit 2.) Instead, the Bible is unquestionably clear that when people die, they know nothing until the glorious moment of the resurrection. They sleep in the tomb until that glorious day.

THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE

18. Who goes to heaven first, the righteous living or the righteous dead? 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17 (1137) [1169].

They "shall be caught up _____ . . . in the clouds".

NOTE: The apostle Paul is very clear that the dead do not meet Jesus before the living. They meet Him together at the second coming.

19. How should believers comfort one another when they lose a loved one? 1 Thessalonians 4:18 (1137) [1169].

"With these _____."

NOTE: It is the hope of the resurrection at the second coming of Christ that is the Christian's comfort when loved ones die.

20. When does the apostle Paul say that both the dead and the living are given immortality and meet Jesus? 1 Corinthians 15:51-54 (1110) [1138].

"At the last _____", which is at the second _____ of Jesus.

NOTE: Notice again Paul's usage of the Biblical term "sleep" for death. What glorious hope the apostle Paul holds out to believers. Death will be swallowed up in victory. Death is not something wonderful to transport us to the realms of bliss. According to the Bible, death is an enemy that shall be destroyed (1 Corinthians 15:26) (1109,1110)[1137].

21. What will be eliminated in the new earth? Revelation 21:4 (1189) [1230].

"There shall be no more _____."

NOTE: Thank God, death is forever eliminated from God's universe.

22. What kind of bodies will we have in the resurrection? Phillipians 3:21 (1131) [1161].

"Who will transform our _____ body that it may be conformed to His _____ body."

NOTE: Amazing truth! Our bodies will be like Christ's glorified, resurrected body!

23. What was Christ's glorified, resurrected body like? Luke 24:36-42 (1024) [1042].

"A spirit does not have _____ and _____ as you see I have."

NOTE: Jesus' resurrected body was not a spirit body, but He possessed flesh and bones. He even ate before the disciples. Jesus had a real physical body in the resurrection. So will the righteous. Our hope in the resurrection indicates that for the Christian, life after death is not a spooky, spirit existence but a real existence with a real body where Christians do real things in a real world. Thank God for the reality of the Christian's hope.

24. Are you thankful for the glorious resurrection hope of Scripture?

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EXHIBIT 1

For Daniel Lesson 17

BIBLICAL TERM FOR DEATH: SLEEP

How does the Bible describe death? The clear ringing testimony of Scripture is found in the lesson, but notice how many times the Bible refers to death as a sleep.

- Deut. 31:16—"Thou (Moses) shall sleep with thy fathers."
- 2 Sam. 7:12—"Thou (David) shalt sleep with thy fathers."
- 1 Kings 1:21—"The king shall sleep with his fathers."
- 1 Kings 2:10—"So David slept with his fathers."
- 1 Kings 11:21—"David slept with his fathers."
- 1 Kings 11:43—"Solomon slept with his fathers."
- 1 Kings 14:20—"He (Jeroboam) slept with his fathers."
- 1 Kings 14:31—"Rehoboam slept with his fathers."
- 1 Kings 15:8—"Abijam slept with his fathers."
- 1 Kings 15:24—"Asa slept with his fathers."
- 1 Kings 16:6—"Baasha slept with his fathers."
- 1 Kings 16:28—"Omri slept with his fathers."
- 1 Kings 22:40—"Ahab slept with his fathers."
- 1 Kings 22:50—"Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers."
- 2 Kings 8:24—"Joram slept with his fathers."
- 2 Kings 10:35—"Jehu slept with his fathers."
- 2 Kings 13:9—"Jehoahaz slept with his fathers."
- Job 3:13—"I should have slept."
- Job 7:21—"Now shall I sleep."
- Psalms 76:5—"They have slept their sleep."
- Jer. 51:39—"And sleep a perpetual sleep."
- Daniel 12:2—"Them that sleep in the dust."
- Matthew 9:24—"Is not dead, but sleepeth."
- John 11:11—"Lazarus sleepeth."
- 1 Cor. 15:6—"Some are fallen asleep."
- 1 Thess. 4:13—"Concerning them which are asleep."
- 2 Peter 3:4—"Since the fathers fell asleep."

Actually the term "sleep" for death occurs some 66 times in 17 different books of the Bible. This is clearly the Biblical term for death. Look up the rest of the texts that mention "sleep" as death. They are:

- 2 Kings 13:13; 2 Kings 14:16, 22, 29; 15:7, 22, 38; 16:20; 20:21; 21:18; 24:6; 2 Chron. 9:31; 12:16; 14:1 16:13; 21:1; 26:2, 23; 27:9; 28:27; 32:33; 33:20; Job 14:12; Psalm 13:3; 76:6; 90:5; Jer. 51:57; Matt. 27:52; Mark 5:39; Luke 8:52; Acts 7:60; 13:36; 1 Cor. 11:30; 15:18, 20; 1 Thess. 4:14, 15.

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

EXHIBIT 2 LESSON 17

THE THIEF ON THE CROSS

One text that many people use in their attempt to prove that people go to heaven at death instead of sleeping in the grave is Luke 23:43 (1542) [1046]. These are the words of Jesus to the thief on the cross. It is amazing how one can do away with 66 clear texts of Scripture that refer to death as a sleep and then use one or two obscure texts on which to build a whole theory. Let's notice the text:

"And Jesus said unto him [the thief on the cross], 'Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise.'"

On the surface it would seem to indicate that Jesus would meet the thief in heaven on that very day. But please notice: did Jesus Himself ascend to heaven that very day? Upon His resurrection from the dead Jesus declared:

"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." (John 20:17) (1587) [1076]

Clearly then, on the morning of the resurrection—three days after He said to the thief on the cross that he would be with Him in paradise that very day—Jesus declared that He had not yet ascended to heaven. Either Jesus told a mistruth or many have misinterpreted Luke 23:43 (1542) [1046].

When the Bible was originally written there was no punctuation, no division into verses and chapters. These have all been added by men to make it easier to read the Bible. Certainly we can be grateful for that. However, perhaps they have not always punctuated correctly. By changing a comma in Luke 23:43, let's notice how the text now harmonizes with the rest of the Bible:

"And Jesus said unto him, 'Verily I say unto thee today, thou shalt be with me in paradise.'"

Thus Jesus did not speak a lie. He did not promise the thief that he would be in paradise that very day, but only that he would be there when all the righteous of all ages will be there—when Jesus comes the second time. Rearranging the comma makes this text completely harmonize with the rest of the Bible. And remember, the punctuation was added by man; it was not inspired.

There are a few other places in Scripture where the translators have obviously misplaced a comma, such as Acts 19:12 (1627) [1103]

"So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them."

As the text reads, it talks about sick handkerchiefs, which is ridiculous. Obviously, the translators failed to put a comma after "sick." If they had, it would make perfect sense. Likewise in Luke 23:43, a changed comma not only makes more sense, but allows the text to harmonize with the rest of Scripture.