



SAVED TO SERVE
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THE STATE OF THE DEAD, PART 1

1. In this Sabbath School Lesson, we will lay the foundation for the doctrine of the State of the Dead. Additional points will be covered in the following lesson.
2. Who only has immortality? 1 Timothy 6:14-16; 1 Timothy 1:16, 17 _____
3. What was Satan's lie to the first humans? Genesis 3:4-5

“The only one who promised Adam life in disobedience was the great deceiver. And the declaration of the serpent to Eve in Eden—“Ye shall not surely die”—was the first sermon ever preached upon the immortality of the soul. Yet this declaration, resting solely upon the authority of Satan, is echoed from the pulpits of Christendom and is received by the majority of mankind as readily as it was received by our first parents. The divine sentence, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:20), is made to mean: The soul that sinneth, it shall not die, but live eternally. We cannot but wonder at the strange infatuation which renders men so credulous concerning the words of Satan and so unbelieving in regard to the words of God.” {GC 533.2}

4. **Note:** A popular belief among Christendom is that a soul is a separate entity from our body that lives on after we die. However, this is contrary to what the Bible teaches.
5. What is the Biblical formula that comprises a soul? Genesis 2:7

6. Who does the word “soul” refer to in various passages of the Bible? Exodus 1:5; 1 Peter 3:20; Acts 2:41; 27:37

7. Can a soul die? Ezekiel 18:4, 20; Revelation 16:2, 3 _____
8. What happens when a person dies? Ecclesiastes 12:7

9. What is the “spirit” that returns to God at death? Job 27:3; Genesis 2:7; James 2:26

10. **Note:** Another popular belief is that when a person dies, they go straight to heaven, hell, or purgatory (a false Catholic doctrine of a place that purifies you of sin before you enter heaven). None of these beliefs have their foundation in scripture.
11. Where does a person go when they die? Acts 2:29, 34; Job 21:30, 32; 7:7-10

12. What does Jesus call death? John 11:11-14; Psalm 13:3 _____
13. Why is death called a sleep? Job 14:10, 12-13; John 5:28-29

14. When is the resurrection of life? 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; Revelation 20:4, 6

15. When is the resurrection of the wicked? Revelation 20:7-8, 12-13

Rebuttals

16. In Luke 23:42-43, the thief on the cross asked Christ to remember him when He came into the kingdom, and Jesus responded that He would take the thief with Him to paradise. People use this passage of scripture to say - on that same day, the thief went to heaven with Jesus. Did Jesus go to heaven on the same day He died? John 19:38-42; 20:1-2, 15-17

17. When will the thief on the cross reign with Jesus in paradise? 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17; Revelation 22:12

18. **Note:** When Jesus told the thief on the cross, that 'today he would be with Him in paradise,' the thief got assurance that day of his salvation, but he will not receive his reward until we all (those who remain faithful) receive it at the Second Coming.

19. Some people teach that Jesus went to hell for three days (Psalm 16:10; Matthew 12:40) and preached to those that were there (1 Peter 3:19, 20). What is the meaning of the word "hell" in Psalm 16:10? **Answer:** It means the grave. Jesus' body was in the grave for three days; God did not leave His body in the grave long enough for it to decompose and corrupt (see John 11:39). Further Study: Here is another example of scriptures where the word "hell" means "the grave" (Psalm 116:3; Revelation 20:14).

20. Read 1 Peter 3:18-19 again. In verse 18, it tells us that Jesus died for our sins but was quickened or given life by the Spirit. Then, verse 19 says that He preached to spirits in prison. Who are the prisoners that Jesus preached to based on scripture? Were they living or dead beings? Luke 4:18, 21 **Answer:** Jesus preached to living humans being who were held captive to sin and Satan (2 Timothy 2:26). He came to set the captives free. 1 Peter 3:20 confirms that Jesus preached to living humans by comparing the disobedient in the time of Noah to the disobedient in the time of Christ. Both Jesus and Noah preached to souls or people who were held captive to sin.

21. **Note:** Many Christians use Philippians 1:23-24 and 2 Corinthians 5:8 to argue that Paul taught that 'being absent from the body and present with the Lord' means when a righteous person dies, their earthly body remains on earth and their spirit immediately goes to heaven.

22. Since Paul is the author of both books, let us see how he explains himself. Based on 2 Corinthians 5:4, what occurrence was Paul looking forward to signaling that the righteous would be 'absent from the body and present with the Lord'? Job 14:14; 1 Corinthians 15:51-55

23. **Note:** Only those who by God's grace are righteous and remain righteous still (Revelation 22:11), will receive the gift of immortality and be translated to heaven to reign with Jesus.

24. As we close, let us meditate on 1 Corinthians 15:52-58.

"Nowhere in the Sacred Scriptures is found the statement that the righteous go to their reward or the wicked to their punishment at death. The patriarchs and prophets have left no such assurance. Christ and His apostles have given no hint of it. The Bible clearly teaches that the dead do not go immediately to heaven. They are represented as sleeping until the resurrection. 1 Thessalonians 4:14; Job 14:10-12. In the very day when the silver cord is loosed and the golden bowl broken (Ecclesiastes 12:6), man's thoughts perish. They that go down to the grave are in silence. They know no more of anything that is done under the sun. Job 14:21. Blessed rest for the weary righteous! Time, be it long or short, is but a moment to them. They sleep; they are awakened by the trump of God to a glorious immortality. "For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible.... 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 Corinthians 15:52-54. As they are called forth from their deep slumber they begin to think just where they ceased. The last sensation was the pang of death; the last thought, that they were falling beneath the power of the grave. When they arise from the tomb, their first glad thought will be echoed in the triumphal shout. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Verse 55." {GC 549.3}