

## WHERE IS YOUR SOUL AFTER DEATH?

by Sheldon Emry

A most common teaching among the Protestant and Catholic churches about the "soul" of man is that it leaves the body at death and goes either to heaven, if the person is "saved," or to hell, where the "unsaved" are tormented for eternity. Although there is less "hell-fire" preaching today than in the past, the priests and preachers still insist, when pressed, that "hell" is a place where unsaved "souls" suffer fire and torture for ever and ever, an eternity of indescribable pain without end.

Many people have rejected this idea of a torturing "hell." Some just ignore it and desire not to discuss it, although they accept the other side of the coin, i.e., the "soul" of the believer going to heaven for eternity if he has "confessed belief in Jesus Christ" while still alive.

Others, in rejecting this teaching of hell, reject the entire Christian religion, saying they cannot trust a God who will torture billions and billions of people forever just because those people, while alive, did not know or did not "confess" Him.

So let us examine this "hell," and search the Scripture to find the Bible Truth on "Where is your Soul after death?"

### SHEOL

The English word "hell" appears 31 times in the Old Testament and

every time it comes from the Hebrew "sheol," but "sheol," is, also, translated "grave" 31 times, and "pit" 3 times. To fully understand what the Bible hell is, we must understand what is meant by the Hebrew word "sheol"

The King James translators of over 400 years ago, obviously, felt both hell and grave carried the full meaning of "sheol." This is true, when we realize from old English sources that the Anglo-Saxon "helan" or "hell" meant "to cover" or "to hide out of sight." When farmers put potatoes or other root crops in underground cellars to prevent winter freezing, they called it "helling them," i.e., putting them into the ground and covering them up. Putting a roof on a new house was called "helling." It was entirely natural for the translators to use either hell or grave for "sheol" since both words meant the same thing! "Hell" is very simply the "grave"!

Reading Scripture, where the word "sheol" was used, will prove it means "grave." Jacob expected to go to "sheol" when he died (**Gen. 37:35; 42:38**). Godly Job, in his sorrow, wished that he had died at birth and gone to "sheol" (**Job 3: 11-19**). In those same verses he describes it as a place, where "*the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest... they hear not the voice of the oppressor.*" Hardly a place of screams and torture and fire!

**Ecclesiastes 9:10** tells us that "*There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in*

*the grave [sheol]. whither thou goest, " and that "The dead know not any thing" (vss. 5, 10). Psalms 6:5 says, "In death there is no remembrance of thee," which is similar to Psalms 115:17, "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence." "Sheol" is translated "grave" eight times in the Psalms (6:5; 30:3; 31:17; 49:14,15; 88:3,5; 89:48. Read them).*

### GEHENNA

In the New Testament the Greek word "gehenna" is translated "hell" 11 times. It is the name of the burning dump out side of Jerusalem where refuse and dead bodies of criminals were burned. Christ and the others used it as a demonstration of destruction, **not** torture! Sinners were NOT tortured there; they had already been put to death for their crime, and then their dead bodies were burned in the dump, because it was thought they had lost any right to be buried in a regular grave. It was all over in a few minutes and **certainly** cannot be compared to being burned alive in a conscious State forever.

Advocates of a tortured existence in a burning hell often use the Sermon on the Mount to "prove" their theology (**Matt. 5**). Christ does warn of the "danger of hell fire" and of being cast "into hell" in vss. **22, 29 and 30**. In each case it is the word "gehenna." Reading the context it is easy to see He was telling His listeners not to sin, for if they did, they would be in danger of being cast into

"gehenna," i.e., **being put to death as a sinner!** This is the same exhortation we read from **Peter**, "*Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer,*" and, "*For it is better... that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing*" (1 Pet. 4: 15; 3:17). In very simple words, Christians are not to sin and end up as criminals.

### HADES

The Greek word "hades" is translated "hell" 10 times in the New Scriptures. In Acts 2, Peter quotes Old Scripture of Christ that God would not leave His "soul in hell [hades]," and therefore, "his soul was not left in hell [hades]" (vss. **27,3 1**). Any good concordance will show you "hades" means "grave"!

The entire story of Christ overcoming death tells us He died and was put in the grave, but did not remain there, but was resurrected. Yet priests and ministers would have us believe that "hades" is a place filled with billions of "souls" in horrible torment, which will go on for eternity. Some even tell of Christ going to this place of hellish sights and sounds and releasing the prisoners there and taking some to heaven with Him, and all sorts of **weird imagined things which have no basis in Scripture whatever!**

In Rev. **20:13** we read of the day of resurrection, "*and the sea gave up the dead which were*

*in it* [still there—not gone somewhere else] *and death and hell* [hades] *delivered up the dead which were in them.*" The margin in most Bibles has a note for "hell" there, saying, "or, the grave." The truth is in the Bible—why won't people see it?

### MOLECH

God's own Law prohibits the torture of men in fire. Israel was ordered not to do so in **Lev. 18:21 and 20:1-5**, and God says that such a thing never "*came... into my mind*" (**Jer. 19:5**). In **Jer. 32:35** He says burning their sons and daughters in "the fire of Molech" was an "abomination" and caused Judah "to sin." Yet preachers tell us that God will do that which He prohibits, and calls an "abomination"!

These scriptures and many other verses give the lie to the hell of the dark ages, which is taught by so many priests and ministers today. Hell is **not** a place of eternal torture where the damned scream in pain for eternity; it is a place of silence, of rest, a place, where its occupants know nothing; a place where righteous Job said he would remain until his Redeemer "*shall stand at the latter day upon the earth*" (**Job. 19:25-27**)

### DEATH

When we understand the Scripture penalty for sin is simply "death" (**Gen. 2: 17, Ezek. 18:4, Romans 6:23** and others), we realize there is no foundation for

this idea that the penalty is "everlasting torture." Christ paid the full penalty for sin, that we might not suffer--what?---everlasting permanent death, **not** everlasting torture! "*And sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death*" (**James 1:15**). Christ "**died for our sins**" (**1 Cor. 15:3**). If the penalty was everlasting torture, would it not follow that Jesus would have had to suffer everlasting torture to pay for our sins? But of course, it isn't, and He didn't. He paid the Scriptural penalty—**death**—for "He is the propitiation for our sins" (**1 John 2:2**).

So we die once and then we are raised to everlasting life in the resurrection. Christ's death and resurrection set the pattern for all. And our resurrection is **not** a spirit resurrection **at our death**, but is a literal resurrection "*at his coming*" (**I Cor. 15:23**).

The "*everlasting punishment*" of **Matt. 25:46** and the "*everlasting destruction*" of **2 Thess. 1:9** are very simply **death**, for God's Law is "*everlasting*" (**Gen. 9: 16; Hab. 3:6, et al**). Notice in **Matt. 25:41** it is the fire, which is everlasting, not, necessarily, the person's term of punishment in it.

### HEAVEN

In demolishing the "hell" of the Catholic and Protestant churches by the Holy light of the Bible, we find we have, also, exposed their false teaching that the "saved" dead go immediately to heaven when they die. Their condition is the same as the unsaved dead; Scripture makes

no difference.

That some people go immediately to heaven is an idea taken from pagan religions that the "spirit" of man lives on after death and never dies. Man, naturally, does not want to die, and this false doctrine gives him hope that he really will **not** die; just his physical body will die, but his real "self" will go right on living, now in heaven instead of on the earth. But Peter said on the day of Pentecost that David "*is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day... for David is NOT ascended into the heavens*" (Acts 2:29,34). This was after Christ had ascended, and, certainly, if Peter had believed the "saved" dead were in heaven, he would have said that David was "now in heaven." But of course he was not; he was in the same place all the dead are in the grave (hell). They are referred to as "*asleep*" in 2 Kings 21:17, 18; John 11:11-14; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; 2 Peter 3:4; and 1 Cor. 15:18.

In 1 Cor. 15, Paul wrote of the resurrection of the dead, "*If there be no resurrection of the dead... then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished*" (vss. 13-18). Where did Paul believe the "saved" dead were? Why, "*fallen asleep*" in the grave, of course, where he said, "if there were no resurrection, they are perished!" If the "saved" are all in heaven, as the evangelists preach, we would need no resurrection, and Paul was lying.

Why did our Lord Jesus say of

the resurrection day, "*All that are in the grave shall hear His voice, and shall come forth*" (John 5:28, 29)? How can Jesus call us from the grave, if the Catholics and Protestants are right that we will all be in heaven or in torment in hell? Which will you believe, doctrines of men, or God's Holy Word?

## THE SOUL

But some may still say, "Well, all right, so the body remains in the grave, but what about my soul? Can't it go to heaven, without my body?" So, let's find the scriptural definition of the "soul".

In the creation of Adam we read that God "*breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man [Adam] became a living soul*" (Gen. 2:7; 1 Cor. 15:45). Adam was not given a soul; he became a living soul. The word "soul" comes from the Hebrew "nephesh," which means a breathing creature, animal, beast, body, breath, man, person, self, etc. (Strong's Concordance). It does **not** mean a conscious entity separate from the body, in spite of teachings to the contrary.

What man received from God was "the breath of life," often referred to as the "spirit" in Scripture, from the Hebrew "ruach," or "neshamah," or from the Greek "pneuma." It means air, breath, wind, power, animation, etc. Animals also have this "breath of life," (Gen. 7:21, 22) and it is the same as man's (Eccl. 3: 19). It has no consciousness its self, but it is

the power that enables the physical body and mind to function, to think, to act, i.e., to **live**. The combination of the "breath of life" (the spirit), with the physical body makes "a living soul," whether man, animal, or other. (This is **not** the same as the Holy Spirit; that is a different subject.)

When the breath of life is taken from a man, he dies (**Psalms 104:29,30; 146:4; Job 34: 14,15**), and the breath of life returns to Him who gave it (**Eccl. 12:7**). Being from God, this breath or spirit is indestructible, but the spirit is not the soul It is **not** a conscious you. **You** die. **You** remain dead, until the power of Jesus Christ comes to resurrect you.

That the soul is the living body, which can die or be killed, is made plain in numerous verses, such as **Lev. 5:1,2; 7:20,21,27; Psalms 78:50; and Rev. 16:3**. **Psalms 89:48** says that man shall die and his "soul" goes to the grave (sheol). Look up "soul" in a good concordance and follow it through the Bible, and you will see it cannot mean a separate existence, apart from the living body. Either "life" or "person" can, usually, be substituted for "soul," and the correct meaning will still be there. Try it and see how clear it is.

## OUR REWARD

You may still ask, "But my minister is always telling me, my reward is in heaven (**Matt. 5:12**). Don't I have to go to heaven to receive it?"

It is there, all right, if your

name is written "*in the Book of Life*" (**Rev. 3:5; 20:12; Malachi 3:16**), but if you have to go there to get it, why does Jesus say, "*And, behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be*" (**Rev. 22:12**)? All the writers of Scripture contemplated a reward at the end of the age, after their resurrection, **not** at their death!

Some have misunderstood Paul to imply that he would be in the presence of Jesus as soon as he died, but he knew the truth of death and the grave, that "*the dead know not any thing.*" He knew that at the moment of resurrection it would be as if he had, the previous moment, "fallen asleep." The dead are not conscious of the passage of time, be it an hour or a thousand years!

## THE GREAT DECEIT

So far you have seen from the meaning of the original words and verses that the doctrine of man's continuing, conscious existence after death is false. But there is a greater deception here than you perhaps might see upon casual examination.

Turn to **Genesis 3** and read the story of the serpent's deception of Eve, and then of Adam. God had told them **not** to eat of a certain tree "*lest ye die.*" But the serpent said to Eve, "*Ye shall not surely die: but your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods*" God's Word tells us today

that all shall die and "*the wages of sin is death*," i.e., if your disobey, you shall die!

But the false ministers today tell us that only the body dies, and that the real us will just go right to heaven and be with the Lord. What are they saying? They are saying that, "Ye shall not surely die but your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as god's (live in heaven)!"

If there is any teaching of the Catholic and Protestant churches that creates an "I couldn't care less" attitude toward the condition of God's earth and its people, it is this false doctrine that is but the slightly altered original deception of our race! The Gospel of The Kingdom, the true Gospel of the Bible, teaches that men are to be resurrected "on the earth" (**Job 19:25; 1 Cor. 15, etc.**), and shall "reign on earth" (**Rev. 5:10**) with the Lord Jesus Christ (**2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 20:6**), for "*the heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; but the earth hath He given to the children of men*" (**Psalms 115:16**).

This "gospel" that we are all going to heaven as soon as we die is the very opposite of Bible truth. By deceiving men about the true nature of man and death, the ministers keep men's eyes on a heaven they will never see and help the antiChrists take control over the earth!

The entirely human desire **not** to "surely die," but to go on living in some form, is exploited by them to lead men to believe a lie today,

just as Adam and Eve's desire not to die, but to "be as gods," led them to be deceived in their day!

The doctrine that man's "immortal soul" is in danger of eternal torment unless it is somehow "saved" for heaven by the priests, gives that priesthood, through fear, domination over those who have succumbed to the doctrine of immortality.

It was just that fear that the Roman priests could send a man to eternal torture that brought all of Europe under the sway of the Roman priesthood in the "dark ages."

Great men of northern Europe broke that power of the Roman priests with the Light of Bible Truth, that man is mortal and cannot be sentenced to eternal torment by the priests; nor can priests reward him with eternal bliss for obeying them. These great men of the Protestant Reformation taught the truth of man's state after death, that his resurrection to life was his great hope, and that it was entirely in the power of a merciful Jesus Christ.

#### **Martin Luther wrote:**

"Now, if one should say that Abraham's soul lives with God, but his body is dead, this distinction is rubbish. I will attack it. One must say, 'The whole Abraham, the whole man shall live.' The other way you tear off a part of Abraham and say, 'It lives.' This is the way the philosophers speak: 'Afterward the soul departed from its domicile,' etc. That would be a silly soul if it were in heaven and

desired its body!" (**from Luther's Works, Vol. 54, p. 447.**)

**Here is William Tyndale:**

"The true faith putteth (teaches) the resurrection, which we be warned to look for every hour. The heathen philosophers, denying that, did put (teach) that the souls did ever live. And the Pope joineth the spiritual doctrine of Christ and the fleshly doctrine of the philosophers together... therefore he corrupteth the Scripture... And again, if the souls be in heaven ... what cause is there of the resurrection?" (**from An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue, Book 4, Ch 2, pp 188, 189.**)

As you can now see, the doctrine of immortality, now taught in most Protestant churches, is actually the false teaching of the pagans and of the Roman Catholic whore. God's people have, again, come under bondage to false priests. Only the truth can, again, set them free.

One final thought, especially since so many modern ministers answer the claims of the Old Testament that man is mortal and does not suffer eternal torment by saying: "Yes, we realize the Old Testament does not teach immortality and eternal torment, but that was not revealed to the Patriarchs and the Prophets; it was only revealed after Christ." They are saying that all the heathen philosophers and pagan priests had the "truth of immortality" and that God not only hid the "truth"

from His own Holy Prophets, but had them write lies in His Holy Word. Their explanation makes God a liar and deceiver. They are further saying that "eternal torture" as punishment for breaking God's Law was not revealed when God gave the Law itself, but was withheld and revealed in all its terror only in the "age of grace" in "the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ!" What blasphemy they utter against the true gospel of Jesus Christ.

No, God did not lie, either in the Old Testament or in the New. His entire Word is true, and may this article bring many readers out of heathen darkness and pagan philosophy into the Light of God's Truth and set them free from the false priests of darkness. We pray that in Jesus' name,

Pastor Sheldon Emry

For more articles, videos, and sermons by Pastor Emry go to:

<http://www.sheldoneemrylibrary.com>

*Distributed by:*

*Faith of the Covenant Fellowship*

*PO Box 832*

*Pembroke, Virginia 24136*

*Website articles and audios about America in the Bible:*

<http://ezra98.yolasite.com/>