

Dying to the Resurrection

by William Ramey

Introduction

An essential biblical doctrine concerns resurrection from death to life. The Scriptures teach that because Jesus died and arose from the dead,¹ so too “those who are Christ’s”² will be raised to life with an imperishable spiritual body at His coming when He returns and the kingdom is fully manifested.³ When the last enemy (death) has been abolished by Him,⁴ then those who belong to Him are subsequently clothed with immortality⁵ before the destruction of the old heavens and earth.

Contrary to the biblical teaching, many well-meaning people fervently believe and teach that resurrection is not absolutely necessary for life after death. It is asserted that God originally created within man an immortal soul that does not die; therefore life continues uninterrupted after the death of the body. Succinctly stated, this unbiblical philosophy generally alleges that everyone has an immortal soul at birth that survives death and immediately goes to heaven, purgatory or to hell⁶ without the necessity for an individual’s resurrection.

This philosophy is so widely believed that if you ask almost any churchgoer where their dead friends or loved-ones are, they will confidently declare that they are in heaven with the Lord. This response is predictable because the belief in an immortal soul gradually gained prominence in the Body of Christ from the Second Century A.D. onward, so that now, it has become an unquestionable belief within Christianity.⁷ This persistent belief has influenced doctrines, personal evangelism, missionary outreach, gospel tracts, encouragement, exhortation, hymnology, artistry and creeds—and much

¹ Many New Testament passages substantiate Jesus’ resurrection, either as predictive or historical (Matt. 16:21-23; 20:19; 26:61; Mk. 8:31-33; 9:9-13; 14:28; Lk. 9:22; 24:46; Jn. 2:19; 10:17-18; Acts 2:22-32; 10:39-40; 17:1-3; 26:22-23; Rom. 1:4; 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:3-4; 1 Pet. 1:3; 3:21.

² The phrase “those who are Christ’s” in 1 Cor. 15:23 translates οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, which also occurs in Gal. 5:24 and explicitly identifies those who belong to Christ Jesus: “Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” Current Protestant and Catholic theology greatly varies from Paul’s austere identification of those who belong to Christ; however, this author adheres to Paul’s and to no other.

³ 1 Cor. 15:42-49. See also Dan. 12:2; Mk. 13:26-27; Jn. 14:1-3; Rom. 6:3-5; 1 Cor. 15:20-23, 51-53; 2 Cor. 4:14; Phil. 3:20ff; Col. 3:4; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Thess. 1:10; 2:1; Rev. 19:1—20:6.

⁴ 1 Cor. 15:25-26: “For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death.”

⁵ Especially observe the temporal sequence in 1 Cor. 15:52-54 and the distinction between the two words imperishability and immortality that the author uses. These terms are not synonymous.

⁶ Depending upon one’s theological persuasion, one of these three is commonly believed to be the destination for all immediately after death. Other belief systems maintain that the immortal soul takes on different bodies in succession of incarnations. None of these belief systems are supported by Scripture, nor shared by this author.

⁷ What was at one time vehemently opposed by Christians in the early Second Century has now been completely embraced. In a treatise on the faith, Justin Martyr wrote to Trypho, “If you have fallen in with some who say they are Christians and who deny the resurrection, but who say that their souls when they die are taken to heaven, do not imagine that they are Christians” (*Dialogue with Trypho*, chapter 80, ca. 150 A.D.).

more. Its powerful influence also includes the manner by which many English translations have chosen to render several words from both the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. Thus, it is understandable why so many churchgoers unknowingly maintain a loyal and unwavering stance that is contradictory to the Scriptures.

The belief that man is inborn with an immortal soul has had a devastating effect. The underlying destructive result ridicules, and therefore lessens in man's eyes the very real need for resurrection. A person's resurrection from death to life is God's ONLY solution for unconditional death that both the man and woman first suffered and every person since then. What has been substituted in lieu of God's remedy is the preposterous teaching that, at death, man does not entirely return to the ground as the mortal being he is, but an imaginary immortal soul "flies away" beyond the intergalactic stars into heaven or Paradise.⁸

The melodious and well-liked song by Alison Krauss, "I'll Fly Away", reflects the popular notion that at death, a person—although not stated in what form—ascends "to a home on God's celestial shore" without the intervention of resurrection.

*Some glad morning when this life is o'er,
I'll fly away;
To a home on God's celestial shore,
I'll fly away (I'll fly away).*

*When the shadows of this life have gone,
I'll fly away;
Like a bird from prison bars has flown,
I'll fly away (I'll fly away).*

*Just a few more weary days and then,
I'll fly away;
To a land where joy shall never end,
I'll fly away (I'll fly away).*

Chorus

*I'll fly away, Oh Glory
I'll fly away; (in the morning)
When I die, Hallelujah, by and by,
I'll fly away (I'll fly away).*

⁸ Of course, this is the best case scenario. A person's immortal soul is alternately believed to go to Purgatory or Hell, depending upon one's theological belief system. Regardless, it is interesting that most believe that their friends and loved-ones invariably go to heaven, whereas the "others" suffer the horrors of Purgatory or Hell.

Even from youth, we are thoroughly conditioned to believe that an immortal soul is released from our bodies at death. A familiar prayer—taught by naïve parents to their children—exemplifies how this idea easily becomes indelibly etched into a person’s mind from early childhood and transmitted to successive generations.

*Now I lay me down to sleep
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.
If I should die before I ‘wake,
I pray the Lord my (immortal) soul to take.*

A well-known Irish toast touts: “May your soul already be in heaven an hour before the devil knows your dead.” By such song lyrics, poems, and well-intended toasts, Satan promotes that life after death is possible without resurrection. Satan’s lie supplants God’s only solution for His people’s physical death because of their transgressions against Him, which is resurrection when Jesus appears the second time.

The LORD God declared to the first man His prohibition, and if transgressed, the ensuing catastrophic and unconditional sentence of death.

¹⁶“The LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘From any tree of the Garden you may eat freely; ¹⁷but from the Tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat from it, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die” (Genesis 2:16-17).

The first man and woman had never seen or experienced the sting of death. Thus, when the Serpent boldly asserted later, “Not—you surely will die” (Genesis 3:4),⁹ the woman was seduced¹⁰ not by what she knew, but by what she experientially did not know. Since that time, the horrors of death have become all too real; despite this, the satanic conspiracy has never changed. His desire always has been to deflect man’s attention away from the realized result that disobedience to God inevitably produces—unqualified death. Thus, instead of dismissing entirely the divine warning as a bluff, he has ingeniously redefined the term “death” to designate an illusory spiritual death, and not the tragic unconditional death that it is.

⁹ The Hebrew sentence word order stresses the boldness of the Serpent’s denial. The LORD God said, “You shall surely die” (Genesis 2:17). The Serpent cunningly said, “Not—you shall surely die”. The normal word order would have been “You shall surely not die” with the negative preceding the finite verb; however here, it is placed in front of the entire construction. Effectively, the Serpent quotes the words of the LORD God except placing his negation in front of it. What was at first a question about the LORD’s prohibition by the Serpent to the woman now became his denial of the consequence of disobedience to God—death.

¹⁰ Paul alluding to this event said, “For it was Adam who was first created, *and* then Eve. *And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression*” (1 Timothy 2:13-14). This forms Paul’s grounds for which “a woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority of a man, but to remain quiet” (1 Timothy 2:11-12).

An underpinning satanic doctrine substantiating that man has an immortal soul and therefore is a spiritual being, is that in the Garden man instantaneously died spiritually and not physically when the first man and woman sinned. The logical proof presented is that neither the man nor woman suffered immediately the consequences of physical death “in the day” after disobeying; after all, Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years (Genesis 5:5). Hence, since the LORD God said, “for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die” (Genesis 2:17), both the man and woman must have died spiritually “in the day” and not physically. Thus, if one can die spiritually, he must be a spiritual being that possesses an immortal soul that cannot die. At first glance, this almost universal explanation seems plausible, especially since God cannot lie. However, upon further examination, it does not hold up to contextual scrutiny.

First, the phrase “in the day” in the LORD’s decree “for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die” does not semantically necessitate a literal twenty-four hour period. Its previous occurrence in Genesis 2:4 certainly does not: “This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day¹¹ that the LORD God made earth and heaven”. The figurative use of the term “day” pertains to the total time during which God created the heavens and the earth in six literal twenty-four periods as narrated in the previous context (Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31).¹² The extended usage of “day” is also used in phrases such as “day of my distress” (Genesis 35:3), “the Day of the LORD” (Isaiah 13:6-9; Malachi 4:5), and “the day of harvest” (Proverbs 25:13) when a designated and extended period of time during a situation is characterized in a particular manner.

Thus, when the LORD decreed “for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die,” it does not mean that in the twenty-four hour period in which the man and woman disobeyed Him that their death would be complete, but that the death process would begin on that day and culminate in complete decay—to dust. This is made abundantly clear in Genesis 3:19 when the LORD God said to the same man who disobeyed Him:

¹¹ The Hebrew phrase is exactly the same in both instances of Genesis 2:17 and 3:4 (בַּיּוֹם). The meaning “day” as a twenty-four hour period is weakened when a prepositional phrase is linked with a verb. The most common example is when the prepositional phrase is used in conjunction with an infinitive (almost seventy times) as a general indication of time or a temporal conjunction meaning “when”. In any case, “day” expresses temporal duration, whether a fixed point in time or a temporal duration by indicating periods of time of various lengths.

¹² When the Hebrew term “day” is used in conjunction with a cardinal number (“one”, “two”, “three”, etc. as in Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23), it ALWAYS designates a literal twenty-four hour period. A cardinal number is not used in conjunction with the phrase “in [the] day” in Genesis 2:4 or 2:17. Furthermore, the Hebrew (definite) article does not occur in the phrase “in [the] day” either in Genesis 2:4 or 2:17. If the author desired to make sure the reader understood that death was finalized on the same day in which they transgressed, the article would be present with a following demonstrative pronoun (cf. Gen. 7:11; 15:18; 26:32; 30:35; 33:16; 48:20; Ex. 5:6; 14:30; 19:1; 32:28; Lev. 8:34; 16:30; 22:30; 27:23; Num. 6:11; 9:6 [x 2]; 32:10; etc.).

“By the sweat of your face you will eat food, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

Furthermore, after the LORD God’s decree of judgment in Genesis 3:19, He said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the Tree of Life, and eat, and live forever” (Genesis 3:22). If man was originally created with an immortal soul—which he was not—he would have had no need to eat from the Tree of Life to live forever; for he would have been innately incapable of dying—for he is immortal. In God’s grace, however, He prevented man from partaking of the Tree of Life that would have perpetuated their state of decay forever. How horrendous this would have been!

Second, the phrase “spiritual death” NEVER occurs in the Scriptures. Contrary to this fact, most churchgoers still insist that both the man and woman died spiritually when they disobeyed God. It is further asserted that since the Garden, the entire human race has suffered spiritual death at birth (except for Jesus) because of their fore-parents’ transmission of a “sinful nature”. However, the biblical account in Genesis and all of Scripture is silent concerning this. It is only learned by the unsuspecting from a theological paradigm superimposed upon the text. In contradistinction, what is simply said is that the person who disobeyed God is the person who died. How much clearer could the LORD God’s commandment and the subsequent consequence be than ¹⁶“from any tree of the garden you may eat freely; ¹⁷but from the Tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it YOU WILL SURELY DIE” (Genesis 2:16-17)? Death, as the Scriptures repeatedly insist, is exactly what it appears to be: real and absolute.

The apostle Paul states that man is mortal, earthy and natural. He is not a spiritual being at birth nor possesses any spiritual qualities whatsoever. It is only by virtue of the resurrection he becomes a spiritual being: ⁴⁶“However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. ⁴⁷The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven” (1 Corinthians 15:46-47). Whereas a godly individual may be spiritually minded, this does not constitute him as a spiritual being. Man was created from the dust of the ground, and because of disobedience to God will return to the dust of the ground: “for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

How powerful and influential is Satan’s lie that man is a spiritual being and possesses an immortal soul that cannot die? It is in direct proportion to the disbelief that resurrection from the dead is absolutely essential for life after death. After all, why would resurrection be necessary if life after physical death is continued uninterrupted? During Easter celebrations, Jesus Christ’s resurrection is obligatorily preached; it is seldom preached, however, that those who are His are also required to be raised from the dead!

The apostle Paul concludes that if there is no resurrection, then Christ is still dead because He has not been raised, we are still in our sins, perish in despair without any hope of life after death, and to be pitied by all.

¹⁶“For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; ¹⁷and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied” (1 Corinthians 15:16-19).

Apparently, some of the Corinthians did not believe in a resurrection. Therefore, Paul's irrefutable argumentation is that if there is no resurrection, how can one then assert Christ is alive since He died on the Cross for sin? Furthermore, if Christ did not rise from the dead, all that may be confirmed is that He is still in the grave—“your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.” And if the faith of those alive is worthless because there is no resurrection, so then was the faith of those who preceded them in death, “then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.”

The full force of Paul's reasoning has apparently fallen on deaf ears throughout the centuries. If everyone in the human race is born with an innate immortal soul, how can then Paul logically conclude that if there is no resurrection they perish? Did he not know that man has an immortal soul that assures them to be impervious to death, regardless if there is a future resurrection? Actually, Paul did not know any such thing—and for good reason; it is not biblical. He again restates his conclusion, “If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” (1 Corinthians 15:32b). If there is no resurrection, and therefore no life after death, Paul concludes that one should live their life in any manner they please, for after death “we die”, or as he had earlier concluded, “then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.”

According to the Scriptures, death of a spouse dissolves the marital union and remarriage is allowed, and in instances of young widows, it is even encouraged. But how can this be lawful and not constitute adultery if indeed the spouse is not actually dead but their life continues uninterrupted after their physical death?

In support that “the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives,” Paul states, “for the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man” (Romans 7:1-3). A husband's death severs the marriage covenant, and thus frees the widow to marry again without committing adultery. As would be expected, this is consistent with Paul's instruction to

the Corinthians, “A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 7:39). He even strongly instructs young widows to remarry as not to give the enemy no occasion for reproach (1 Timothy 5:11-15). Furthermore, the Mosaic Law obliged a brother to marry the widow of his childless deceased brother, with the firstborn child being treated as that of the deceased brother which renders the child the heir of the deceased brother and not the biological father (Deuteronomy 25:5-6; cf. Mark 12:19).

If the spouse is in fact not dead in the above biblical citations but continues phenomenally to live after physical death, then the authors are endorsing adultery, thus creating a bizarre scriptural paradox. On the one hand, the Scriptures clearly teach that if a spouse dies, the surviving spouse is free to remarry without committing adultery; on the other hand, if what many believe and teach that the spouse is not really dead but continues to live and the surviving spouse remarries, then the same Scriptures wholly condemn the union as adulterous.¹³ However, this is not a scriptural paradox, but one more glaring irresolvable contradiction between the diabolical lie and the biblical truth that the dead are dead until the resurrection, at which time the marital covenant does not continue. “For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven” (Mark 12:25; cf. Matthew 22:30).

Teachings concerning the immortality of the soul and that of the resurrection are far from being complementary truths; they are mutually exclusive, even though many inadvertently intertwine the two ideas together. Educated Greeks whom Paul addressed in Athens on Mars Hill recognized this philosophical incongruence and, like some of the Corinthians, most scorned Paul’s instruction concerning the resurrection (Acts 17:32). It is past time for God’s people to reject Satan’s lie that man has an immortal soul and stand foursquare that our only hope from the jaws of death is resurrection.

Despite that during funerals the deceased is lying motionless in their coffin, there are those who will obstinately reject God’s resolute edict that due to sin, the result is the same for all: “You shall surely die”. Even while the deceased is lowered into the ground and covered by the earth, they choose to embrace Satan’s enduring lie, “Not—you shall surely die”, instead of the Creator’s agonizing truth, “you are dust, and to dust you shall return”. Whereas God’s evidence lies pitifully decaying in the coffin, most of God’s people from the commonest man to the most scholarly individual defiantly reject His decree: “You shall surely die.”

¹³ Adultery is the most condemned of all the sexual sins, and the penalty for it under the Mosaic Law was death by stoning (Deuteronomy 22:21ff; cf. John 8:4-5). Adultery is sexual intercourse between a married (and living) person and someone other than his or her lawful living spouse. Scriptural examples that condemn adultery include Exodus 20:14, Leviticus 18:20, 20:10, Deuteronomy 5:18, Proverbs 6:32, Jeremiah 7:9, 23:14, 29:23, Ezekiel 16:38, 23:37, Hosea 4:2, Malachi 3:5, Matthew 5:27-32, Mark 10:11-12, Luke 16:18-20, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, and Hebrews 13:4.

During religious services Satan's "truth" is unquestioned and touted as God's truth. The dead are believed to be still living and very powerful because prayers are offered to Mary and the patron saints who intercede on their behalf to God. At funeral services the grieving are regularly comforted that their loved-one is still alive and with Jesus in heaven, walking together the streets of gold among the pearly gates. In other ways other than religiously, the immortality of the soul is substantiated by necromancy,¹⁴ stirring stories of reincarnation, or by the warm heartfelt story of a loving parent smiling down from heaven upon their child's achievements.¹⁵

Those who publically object to Satan's lie and proclaim instead that the dead are dead whether on religious grounds or not, are characterized by worldly standards as unfeeling and unsympathetic or religiously as a heretic. Thus, it is little wonder that due to fear because of peer pressure and therefore possible financial or status loss, those who know better will voluntarily choose to remain silent or teach something else that is "safe" and palpable in the churches, rather than heralding God's truth.

This is the lie that has allured the human race from the beginning (John 8:44):¹⁶ "Not—you shall surely die." Satan's sinister scheme could not have succeeded better. Instead of accepting the LORD's judgment, "for you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19), man has alternatively believed Satan's denial of absolute death due to their sin, and defiantly elevated themselves to a god-like being, outfitted with an immortal soul that cannot die.¹⁷ Ancient literature testifies that this belief took root in the Babylonian, Egyptian, and Greek cultures, both in their secular and religious traditions so that as time progressed, it spread like an insidious virus infecting most cultures. With some notable exceptions, its popularity gained extensive approval among respected worldly philosophers, educators and religious leaders.

¹⁴ Necromancy is a practice by the living attempting to communicate with the spirits of the dead in order to predict or influence the future. This practice is forbidden by Scripture (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

¹⁵ Recently at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, Joannie Rochette's mother unexpectedly died shortly before her qualifying round and bronze medal performance in free skating. During several interviews on NBC, the interviewers reminded Joannie that her mother must be proud of her as she smiles down from heaven.

¹⁶ The article that agrees grammatically with "lie" (τὸ ψεῦδος) occurs in the Greek text, but omitted in most English translations (KJV, NKJV, ASV, NASB, WNT, and NIV). Young's Literal Translation is a notable exception: "when one may speak the falsehood". Jesus' use of the article presupposes that His audience knows "the lie/falsehood" of Satan. There is no other so well-known lie in all of Scripture that has influenced countless millions of God's people and rejected Jesus' teaching concerning the consequences of sin (John 8:31-59). It appears it was not because Jesus was the anticipated Messiah that drove those who had believed in Him to anger, for they had eye-witnessed the many prophetic signs, miracles, and wonders to be performed by the Messiah; nor was it that He preached the long-awaited Kingdom had come, for the same people anticipated it as the Hebrew prophets had prophesied. Instead, I suggest that it was because Jesus, the Messiah of the Kingdom, preached the required righteousness to enter into the Kingdom and the consequences of sin to His people that enraged them so much so as to pick up stones to stone Him.

¹⁷ Before those who belong to Christ are clothed with immortality (1 Corinthians 15:52-54), the Scriptures emphatically state the one "who alone possesses immortality" is God (1 Timothy 6:15).

Like a vortex, Satan's lie swallows up other essential biblical teachings, rendering them impotent. Christ's return to resurrect His people at the visible manifestation of His earthly kingdom is also not crucial.¹⁸ If one has an immortal soul, let's admit it, there is no need to be resurrected from the dead to live forever. Also, since they who have already died in the Lord are imagined enjoying the comfort and presence of Jesus, His kingdom, judgment, and therefore personal accountability, all fall to the wayside.¹⁹ Thus, "the blessed hope"²⁰ is outrageously substituted for a person's imaginary immortal soul that ascends into heaven at death.

Jesus Christ is presently in the Holy Sanctuary in the heavenly tabernacle as the High Priest for His people to make propitiation for their sins (Hebrews 2:17).²¹ No other individual was ever allowed by God to enter into the earthly Holy Sanctuary except the high priest, and that only one day a year, the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:34). The idea that after death an individual's immortal soul ascends to the heavenly tabernacle and into the Holy Sanctuary is absurd. If what was at stake was not so serious, it would be laughable. **ONLY ONE MAN IS ALLOWED IN THE HOLY SANCTUARY, THE HIGH PRIEST, AND THAT POSITION HAS BEEN FILLED.**²²

The motivation for becoming Christ's disciple is also disavowed by Satan's lie. Luke records in 14:26-27 in his Gospel what Jesus said on one occasion.

²⁶"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. ²⁷Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

To be a disciple of Christ is only an "all or nothing" proposition. Why would anyone voluntarily subject themselves to a life of self-sacrifice when, as commonly taught, individuals have a "free pass" into heaven without any repercussions irrespective of an ungodly life? Would a person go to work if they were paid anyway? So, why should a person become Christ's disciple?

¹⁸ Speaking of the resurrection, Paul states, "But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming" (1 Corinthians 15:23).

¹⁹ To the degree the fallacious belief in an immaterial/immortal soul gradually infiltrated, interest diminished in Christ's return, and even resurrection from the dead. What arose was a different system of theology as espoused in early Church fathers' writings, namely, a spiritual kingdom, and at death, one ascends into heaven. This substituted theological paradigm shift helped to relieve the tension that the early Christians felt when Christ did not return as soon as expected. Perhaps the thought was, if Christ is not coming for me, I will go to Him.

²⁰ Paul coined the phrase, "the blessed hope" in Titus 2:13: "looking for the blessed hope, even the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus."

²¹ See also Hebrews 7:26-27, 8:1-6, 9:11-14 and 23-28.

²² The earthly tabernacle was a copy of the heavenly one as attested by Hebrews 8:5 (cf. Ex. 25:40) and 9:23-26.

Perhaps all this seems preposterous. After all, at the Fifth Lateran Council in 1513, Pope Leo X specifically condemned mortalism and insisted that only those who believe in the human immortal soul are true Christians! Even during the reformation the prolific author John Calvin was one of many who wrote very passionately advocating an immortal soul (*Psychopannychia*, 1534). As a result, even though there is not a single reference in the Scriptures, the teaching of the human immortal soul has become impudently embraced and taught in both Protestant and Roman Catholic churches.

Satan's charade has gone almost universally unchallenged since its inception. So that today in one form or another, his well-crafted and cunning deception infiltrates our literature, whether in fairytales to best-sellers on the New York Time list, television and radio, music and block-buster films. Interestingly when death is visually depicted, a person's supposed immortal soul is invariably identical to their physical appearance, outfitted with physical abilities and even fully dressed in the same clothes as when they died! Is this a joke? Why would an immortal soul need clothes? Why would it have physical attributes? When God is not believed concerning the dead, people are willing to believe and makeup anything—even by His own people.

God does not require us to believe human speculation, philosophy, or fairytales, but in His revelation. What a tragedy it is that over the centuries God's people have failed to teach clearly man's mortality and the reality of death. There is nothing in man, however noble, which is not subject to death and by nature corruptible. God has imposed death because of disobedience, and yet, against all of Scripture and common sense, most people—even His own—still cling to the apparition that any person effectively survives death apart from the resurrection. And contrary to God's Word, they have aided and abetted this belief, providing a foothold for belief that man has an immortal soul, and thus undermining the Gospel which it is suppose to proclaim!

The belief in an immortal soul is a serious matter. If indeed the Scriptures clearly and unambiguously teach that man was originally created with an immortal soul and that soul had the capacity to die spiritually, then such doctrines must of course be considered as essential teachings of the Christian Church. If, however, the Scriptures teach that man was created mortal and earthy—and they do—it would be offensive to God to say otherwise and brand those who are unswerving in their defense of the Word of God as heretics.

The Scriptures do not state that man dies a "spiritual death" because of his transgression against a holy God. Neither do the Scriptures state that anyone has an immortal soul. Contrary to all other religious systems, it is only the Scriptures that combat against these satanic deceptions, whereas the Scriptures state that resurrection from the dead is the only means to experience life after physical death.

Like a sentry, Satan tenaciously guards his redefining of “death” from being exposed. He knows that once his audacious lie is toppled, his ungodly influence over a person begins to fall like a row of dominos. He defends and fortifies his deceit by interweaving it with half-lies and untruths. To uncover Satan’s lie requires a relentless study of and faith in God’s Word concerning man’s creation, disobedience, death and resurrection. Only under the weight of scriptural testimony will Satan’s lie collapse.²³

I began this essay with Paul’s succinct statement from 1 Corinthians 15:23 that unless those who belong to Christ are resurrected, they would perish from existence after their death.²⁴ Contrary to popular opinion, the Scriptures do not address the final outcome of the “outsiders”;²⁵ for the biblical authors were much more concerned about God’s people, to whom their writings were addressed. Even Paul, when listing the order of those involved in resurrection, does not mention the outsiders. This is not surprising since his letter had not been addressed to them.

²⁰“But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. ²¹For since by a man [came] death, by a man also [came] the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. ²³But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming, ²⁴then [comes] the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power” (1 Corinthians 15:20-24).

The most detail in *The Revelation* concerning the dead who do not experience the manifestation of Christ’s initial glorious reign is not given until Revelation 20:11-15. They are the same to whom Apostle John referred to in Revelation 20:5: “The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were complete.”

¹¹“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹²And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is [the book] of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades

²³ A [concordance listing](#) for *nepshesh* is available to those interested. The work cites the seven hundred and fifty-four occurrences of the Hebrew noun in the Scriptures, an exhaustive listing as cited by the Hebrew concordance *Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae* by Solomon Mandelkern, including the Hebrew test and three English translations.

²⁴ The importance of this statement was further developed in the essay (cf. page 6).

²⁵ Paul uses a substantival adverbial phrase, “the outsiders” (τοὺς ἔξω/τοὺς exsō) in 1 Corinthians 5:12-13 to describe those who are outside the assembly. Whereas the violating brother within the assembly required discipline because of his improper actions, Paul makes it clear that his and their authority stops with those within the assembly; “But those who are outside, God judges.”

gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one [of them] according to their deeds. ¹⁴Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

Contrary to Jesus' prior stern warnings exclusively addressed to His people in *The Revelation*, Revelation 20:11-15 is typically herald (most probably because it terrifyingly involves "the second death, the lake of fire") as referring to the outsiders' final judgment, instead of a solemn proclamation that God impartially judges His people.²⁶ To those addressed in the assembly of Smyrna, take special note that it was the exulted Jesus who said: "he who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death" (Rev. 2:11). And again to those in the assembly of Sardis, He stated: "he who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels" (Rev. 3:5). The question is: do we believe Him or what we have heard from others about this resurrection?

I choose to close the *Introduction* with a poem by H. A. Owens on the following pages. Unfortunately, no personal information is known about him. The poem was originally published in a newspaper from the era of the 1940's – 1950's. I received the poem several years ago from a dear friend, [Iain MacMillan](#).

²⁶ To whom Paul addresses his letter, "to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as holy ones," he says, "Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each person according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and imperishability, [He will render] eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, [He will render] wrath and indignation. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also the Greek. For there is no partiality with God" (Romans 2:1-11). See also Hebrews 10:26-31 who are the same individuals "have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10)!

THE FIRST LIE

by H. A. Owens

A lie by Satan once was told,
As he approached the two so bold;
He asked if God has said they'd die,
So Eve did not God's word deny.

Satan was told in words so true,
Just what God said they must not do.
He then told her that old, old lie;
He said, "Ye shall NOT surely die."

The Bible says that they are dead.
Have gone back to an earthly bed;
And that's enough that men should know
Just where the dead all have to go.

If you would know the reason why
So many preach the "Devil's lie,"
They're paid by man to preach a creed,
And dare not all the Bible read.

A class of men they try to please,
They may sit with perfect ease.
And smile at what they have to say,
About some humble Christian's way.

It's true that men will scorn the truth,
That Jesus taught us from his youth.
He taught that men must surely stay,
Down in the grave till judgment day.

Some folks say, "I know we're right,"
And will not search the word for light;
They close their eyes and cannot see
The truth that's written for you and me.

The way is plain, we need not err,
If we will search God's word with fear,
And pray to Him from day to day
That he may lead us all the way.

The truth I know shall make you free,
And in the light you then can see
When you accept the word of God,
And see the paths where saints have trod.

Be careful friends. Be not deceived
By what you've heard, and once believed,
That good folks never have to die,
But they live on beyond the sky.

Remember what the Serpent said
To Mother Eve, and she is dead.
Such things he taught the man at first,
And now we have a sin cursed earth.

Let's seek the straight and narrow way
That leads at last to perfect day;
Give up those things we've always heard
And teach with care the Holy Word.

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