

Death, Then the Resurrection

Part 1: Introduction

by William Ramey

An essential biblical doctrine that constitutes an integral part of the Gospel concerns one's 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 of God 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 immortality before the destruction of the old heavens and earth.⁵

Contrary to the biblical teaching, many well-meaning people fervently believe that resurrection is not absolutely necessary for life after death. These individuals have heard an alternative message to the resurrection from their influential teachers and leaders who are in positions of authority. These persuade others to believe 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 of the body and immediately goes to heaven, purgatory or to hell without the necessity for an individual's resurrection.⁶

¹ Many New Testament passages substantiate Jesus' resurrection, either as predictive or historical (Matthew 16:21-23; 20:18-19; 26:59-61; Mark 8:31-33; 9:9-13; 14:28; Luke 9:22; 24:46; John 2:19; 10:17-18; Acts 2:22-32; 10:39-40; 17:1-3; 26:22-23; Romans 1:4; 4:25; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 1 Peter 1:3; 3:21).

² The phrase "those who are Christ's" in 1 Corinthians 15:23 translates οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, which also occurs in Galatians 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 theological teachings vary greatly from Paul's austere identification of those who belong to Christ.

³ 1 Corinthians 15:42-49. See also Daniel 12:2; Mark 13:26-27; John 14:1-3; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, 51-53; 2 Corinthians 4:14; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; 2:1; Revelation 19:1—20:6.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 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 Corinthians 15:52-54 and the distinction between the two words imperishability (ἄφθαρτος) and immortality (ἀθανασία) that Paul uses. These terms are not synonymous, although many EVV (English Versions) think so; for they substitute in Romans 2:7 the term "imperishability" with "immortality." The Greek word "immortality" only occurs in 1 Corinthians 15:53, 54 and 1 Timothy 6:16. The latter scriptural reference clearly declares that God alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light. When those who belong to Christ are raised, they are raised with an imperishable body (1 Cor. 15:42). Only God is immortal by nature; the resurrected body's nature will be imperishable—not immortal. This is the reason the two terms are not interchangeable even though translators and a few Greek lexicons make them as such.

⁶ Depending upon one's theological persuasion, one of these three is commonly believed to be the destination for all immediately after death. Once one accepts the unbiblical proposition that all humankind possesses an immortal soul, then this gives rise to the notion that one's immortal soul needs to go somewhere after death of the body; hence the 'rational' necessity that an immortal soul ascends to heaven, or descends to hell (an unfortunate translation of the Greek proper place "Gehenna") or purgatory. Other belief systems maintain that the immortal soul takes on different bodies in successions of reincarnations. None of these belief systems are supported by Scripture, nor shared by this author.

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. This persistent belief has influenced doctrines, evangelism, gospel tracts, encouragement, exhortation, hymnology, artistry and creeds—and much 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 to pseudo-Christianity teachings that contradicts the Scriptures.

A religious “doublethink” predominates pseudo-Christianity. People have been so thoroughly indoctrinated that they accept simultaneously two conflicting beliefs as truth and cannot even realize the deception. For example, on the one hand, the Apostle Paul wrote, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to ALL men, because ALL sinned” (Romans 5:12). Yet, on the other hand, new inductees are slowly coerced to assent that some, such as Enoch, Elijah, and/or Mary, bodily ascended into heaven without dying. Satan has cunningly constructed a seductive, counter-Christian cult culture that deceives and masterfully entraps people with ease. The new proselytes do not realize that they have been seduced to the dark side to evangelize the infectious satanic lie. Therefore, what proves much more a difficult challenge is to convince those already deceived to realize the restrictive scriptural truth of Romans 5:12!

A Cursory Historical Development

Like other myths embedded in the satanic counter-Christian cult, the concept of an immaterial soul was at an early stage directly imported from Greek philosophy and interjected into the milieu of Christian thought. Secular history reveals that belief in an immortal soul was a very ancient belief that was embraced by pagan religions in one variation or another.

Plato (428-348 B.C.), its principal exponent, espoused that the soul was the better half of the two parts of man. There was the body, which was cumbersome, temporary, and decaying; and then the soul, the invisible seat of wisdom, which was immortal and effectively trapped by the body until death. However, Plato was not the originator of an immortal soul. He was led to it through Orphic and Eleusinian mysteries “in which Babylonian and Egyptian views were strangely blended” (*Jewish Encyclopedia*, 1941, Vol. 6, *Immortality of the Soul*, pp. 564-566).

In Phaedo’s dialogue (also entitled, “On the Soul”), Plato recounts the final days of the Greek philosopher Socrates, who explains that not only will his soul live on after it is released from the body, but will also be all the better for it. Without the chains of emotions and senses, Socrates states that his soul will get closer to true, pure knowledge of the natural world. Plato was the first to describe the soul as an intangible, incorporeal essence.

What was at one time vehemently opposed scripturally by Christians in the early Second Century has now been almost universally 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.). Sadly later, Origen (ca. 185-254) was perhaps the first theologian to attempt to organize Christian doctrine into a systematic theology. He was an admirer of Plato and believed in the immortality of the soul and that it would depart to an everlasting reward or everlasting punishment at death. In *Origen De Principiis* he wrote “. . . The soul, having a substance and life of its own, shall after its departure from the world, be rewarded according to its deserts, being destined to obtain either an inheritance of eternal life and blessedness, if its actions shall have procured this for it, or to be delivered up to eternal fire and punishments, if the guilt of its crimes shall have brought it down to this . . .” (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 4, 1995, p. 240).

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.

■ Justin Martyr

Augustine (354-430 A.D.) later stated that death meant the destruction of the body, but the conscious soul would continue to live in either a blissful state with God or an agonizing state of separation from God. He wrote in *The City of God* that the soul “is therefore called immortal, because in a sense, it does not cease to live and to feel; while the body is called mortal because it can be forsaken of all life, and cannot by itself live at all. The death, then, of the soul, takes place when God forsakes it, as the death of the body when the soul forsakes it” (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 2, 1995, p. 245). Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1225-1274 A.D.) later stated in *The Summa Theologica* that the soul is a conscious intellect and will and cannot be destroyed. And thus, a few centuries later, the Protestant Reformation leaders generally accepted these traditional views, so they became entrenched in traditional Protestant teaching—so much so that the soul’s immortality is foundational in Western thought, both philosophical and religious. Belief in one’s immortal soul going to heaven or hell absolutely depends on it.

The belief that the human race 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 their unqualified death that both the first man and woman 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.⁷

⁷ A person’s supposed immortal soul is alternately believed to go to purgatory or hell, depending upon one’s theological

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.

I’ll Fly Away

*Some glad morning when this life is over,
I’ll fly away;
To a home on God’s celestial shore,
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)*

*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)⁸*

Even from youth, we are thoroughly conditioned—a cornerstone of Western thought—to believe that an immortal soul is released from our bodies at death. A familiar prayer, which is taught by parents to their children, exemplifies how this idea easily becomes indelibly engraved 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.⁹*

belief system. Regardless, it is interesting that many, if not most, believe that their friends and loved-ones invariably go to heaven, whereas the “others” suffer the horrors of purgatory or hell. Even those of the world have joined in the chorus and proclaim that their loved ones are also in heaven.

⁸ Songwriter: Carl Sumpter. *I’ll Fly Away* lyrics © Carlin America Inc. BMG Rights Management US, LLC. One should keep in mind that billions of people in religions other than traditional Christianity, both in the past and present times, are completely convinced that they have—or are—immortal souls and hope they will go to a happy place or state of being immediately after the death of their body via an immortal soul.

⁹ The poem was first found in print in Thomas Fleet’s *The New England Primer* (First Edition, Boston: 1737; “The New England Primer.” *Wikipedia*, 6 Dec. 2021; Web 16 Apr. 2022). The Primer was “the first reading primer designed for the American

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 in the counter-Christian cult 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 and sins against Him, which is by resurrection when Jesus appears the second time. Until then, almost all of those who belong to Him will die an unequivocal certain death.¹⁰

An Unequivocal Death

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

“¹⁶The LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘From any tree of the Garden you may freely eat; 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), the woman was seduced,¹¹ not by what she knew but by what she experientially did not know. 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 Hebrew word order would have been “You shall surely not die” with the negative preceding the finite verb; 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

colonies.” It appears later in 1840 as a nursery rhyme set to music in “London Jingles” collection by J.G. Rush. “As a poem or prayer, it was included among the readings in several hymnals of the era, such as the Young Singer’s Friend (c.a. 1859), the Hymnal for Primary Classes (c.a. 1896), and the Hymnal for Church and Home (c.a. 1928)” (“Is ‘Now I lay Me Down to Sleep’” *Crosswalk.com*. 30 Jun 2020; Web 16 Apr. 2022). The prayer rhyme slowly became intertwined as part of Western Civilization. The original stanza was modified and additional stanzas have been added or deleted to suit the current circumstances.

¹⁰ The only exception are those “who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord.” When Jesus returns, the Apostle Paul states that those who belong to Him will be instantaneously transformed from a physical body into an imperishable spiritual body (1 Thess. 4:13-18; cf. 1 Cor. 15:51-58).

¹¹ 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 Tim. 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 Tim. 2:11-12). Lest one might think that women do not have a very important function in the assembly, they need to meditate seriously on 1 Cor. 11:1-16 concerning headship in the context of worship. A woman covers her head and remains quiet because she represents the glory of Man. In this manner God alone representatively receives the glory. Likewise, the men represent Christ’s glory; thus as they scripturally proclaim only His glory, they do so in reverence while always being reminded by the women’s heads being covered that Man’s glory is never to be exalted. Woe unto them if they ever exalt Man’s or their own glory during worship! By the way, this is the reason also men remove their caps during prayer or the prophetic proclamation of God’s word. When people try to make this portion of Scripture applicable only during the apostolic era on the basis of cultural reasons, they are incorrect, for Paul roots his instruction in God’s unique creative gender identity, which the world largely ignores.

denial of the consequence of disobedience to God—death.

The sequential chain of the four instances of the Hebrew prefix second person masculine subject pronouns (“you”), and the accompanying verbal actions in vv. 16-17, all indicate the one who transgresses the LORD God’s command not to eat from the Tree of Good and Evil will unequivocally die. In the simplest terms, death is the cessation or termination of a person life.¹² If the man/woman actually possessed an immortal soul that lives on after the body dies, then what the LORD God stated would be false, for they do not actually die.

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!

Since the Garden, the horrors of death have become all too real; despite this, the satanic conspiracy has never changed. His desire always has been to deflect people’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, Satan has ingeniously redefined the term “death” to designate an illusory “spiritual death,” and not the tragic and factual death that it is.

The Counter-Christian Cult’s “Spiritual Death”

An underpinning satanic doctrine substantiating that man has an immortal soul and therefore must be a spiritual being in some sense, is that in the Garden man instantaneously died spiritually and not physically when the first man and woman sinned. The so-called 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, they 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.

¹² The Hebrew infinitive absolute construction (מוֹת תָּמוּת) translates as “you shall surely/certainly die” in v. 17. The infinitive absolute (מוֹת) in the affirmative clause reinforces contextually both the verb’s mood as well as its action (Allen P. Ross, *Introducing Biblical Hebrew* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001], 167-68).

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 day¹³ 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).¹⁴ The extended usage of “day” is also used in phrases such as “day of my distress” (Genesis 35:3; Psalm 18:18; 77:2; 102:2), “the Day of the LORD” (Isaiah 13:6-9; Malachi 4:5), the LORD’s “day of vengeance” (Isaiah 34:8; 61:2; Jeremiah 46:10), “the day of harvest” (Proverbs 25:13), etc. 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 contextually indicate 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: “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.”

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. Genesis 3:19

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 contra-distinction, 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 “¹⁶from any tree of the garden you

¹³ The Hebrew phrase is exactly the same in both instances of Genesis 2:17 and 2:4 (יָמֵי). 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.

¹⁴ 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, 30), it ALWAYS designates a literal twenty-four hour period. A cardinal number is not used 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. 9:6 [x 2]; 32:10; etc.).

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, unequivocal, and absolute.

The Apostle Paul states that the human race is mortal, earthy and natural. No one at birth is a spiritual being nor possesses any spiritual qualities whatsoever. It is only by virtue of the resurrection that they become a spiritual being: “⁴⁶However, 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 the person 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.

The Satanic Seduction

How powerful and influential is Satan’s lie that man is a spiritual being and possesses an immortal soul that cannot die? Its impact is so strong that it supplants the biblical affirmation 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. Therefore, we are still in our sins, and perish in despair without any hope of life after death, and are to be pitied by all.

“¹⁶For 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, being Greeks (cf. Acts 17:22-34), 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.”¹⁵

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, then they perish? Did he not know that man has an immortal soul, assuring it to be impervious to death, regardless if there is a future resurrection?

¹⁵ Paul’s usage of the very strong Greek word ἀπόλλυντο (3rd plural aorist middle indicative < ἀπόλλυμι, “to perish, destroy”) leaves little doubt of the fate of those “who have fallen asleep in Christ” if there is not a 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 that they please, for after death “we die,” or as he had earlier concluded, “then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.” In other words, apart from the resurrection from the dead, there is no other hope of life after death.

However, believers who have died to sin will also be united with Christ when they are resurrected! Paul unequivocally states this in Romans 6:5: “For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection.” Furthermore, scriptural authors NEVER compare believers’ ascension to heaven like that of Jesus Christ, for it never occurs.

Death of a Spouse

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,

“²For 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. ³So 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 7:2-3).

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 elsewhere concerning 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 so as not to give the enemy any 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.¹⁶ However, this is not a scriptural paradox, but one more glaring irresolvable contradiction between the diabolical lie and the biblical truth. The dead are dead until the resurrection, at which time the marital covenant does not continue, for a spouse's death had severed the marital contract. When the Sadducees questioned Jesus concerning which of the seven deceased brothers would be the husband in lawful levirate marriages to one woman, Jesus responded, "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 of them scorned Paul's instruction concerning the resurrection (Acts 17:32). When Paul stood before the procurator Antonius Felix, he solemnly stated, "¹⁴But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets; ¹⁵having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked" (Acts 24:14-15). When Paul offered his defense in Acts 23:6 before the Council, he clearly stated, "Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead!" For Paul, there was no other hope of life after death (cf. Titus 2:13).

Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life

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. Jesus declared, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies" (John 11:25). Even Martha to whom Jesus was speaking understood that resurrection was necessary for life after death: "I know he (Lazarus) will rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John 11:24). Martha viewed this future resurrection as something distant and remote. But what she was not aware of is that the source of that life and resurrection was standing right in front of her and talking to her.

At Lazarus' funeral, Jesus didn't merely claim to be "the resurrection and the life," He proved it. He walked to the tomb where his friend's body had been lying in death for four days. He requested that the stone covering the entrance to the burial cave be removed. "⁴¹So they removed the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, 'Father, I thank you that you have heard

¹⁶ Adultery is the most condemned of all the sexual sins, and the penalty for it under the Mosaic Law was death by stoning (Deut. 22:21ff; cf. Jn. 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 Ex. 20:14; Lev. 18:20; 20:10; Deut. 5:18; Prov. 6:32; Jer. 7:9; 23:14; 29:23; Ezek. 16:38; 23:37; Hosea 4:2; Mal. 3:5; Matt. 5:27-32; Mk. 10:11-12; Lk. 16:18; 1 Cor. 6:9-10 and Heb. 13:4.

Me. ⁴²I knew that you always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me.’ When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come out.’ ⁴⁴The man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, ‘Unbind him, and let him go’” (John 11:41-44; my translation). This is what the biblical text records.

However, all the cults deny what Jesus plainly said, “I am the resurrection and the life.” How does one biblically live again even though they die? Death is conquered by Jesus’ power to raise those who belong to Him. Those who deny this fact deny the inspired Scriptures. Instead, they have invented a different Jesus, a Jesus who does not keep His promise to return and resurrect from death those who are His. Alternatively, they have fully ingested the satanic cocktail that one has an immortal soul (never scripturally mentioned) that ascends after death to heaven where Jesus is in heaven (also never scripturally mentioned), and later, their immortal soul is united with their body (never scripturally mentioned). The Scripture adversely states that Jesus returns,¹⁷ then He resurrects His people,¹⁸ then He sits on the Davidic throne on Earth¹⁹ (not in heaven) from which He rules with His companions over all creation into the ages²⁰ until He delivers the Kingdom up to the Father.²¹

Not once—not even once—do the Scriptures state that anyone ascends into heaven after their death as a disembodied soul/spirit to be with the Lord Jesus Christ! However, this is the hope that many preach as the Gospel! And if people are placing their faith in this false hope, then they have not believed the good news. One would think that if what is commonly believed is true, then the Scriptures would state it at least once. If those who are preaching this false gospel belong to Christ, then what they have to look forward to is to be accursed as the Apostle Paul stated in Galatians 1:6-9:

“⁶I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; ⁷which is not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. ⁸But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! ⁹As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

In all Jesus’ recorded teachings, He NEVER ONCE mentioned anything about an immortal soul; but many times He spoke concerning the necessity of the resurrection,²² as did Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4:

¹⁷ See Matt. 24:27, 30, 44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mk. 13:26; Lk. 12:40; 21:25-28, 34-36; Jn. 6:50-71; 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Cor. 1:7; 4:5; 11:26; Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:4; 1 Thess. 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:2, 23; 2 Thess. 2:8; 2 Tim. 4:8; Titus 2:13; Heb. 9:28; Jas. 5:7-9; 1 Pet. 1:13; 4:13; 5:4; 1 Jn. 2:28; 3:2-3; Jude 21; Rev. 1:7; 3:3, 11; 19:11-21; and 22:12.

¹⁸ See Jn. 5:28-29; Acts 24:15; 1 Cor. 15:20-23; and 1 Thess. 4:13-18.

¹⁹ 2 Sam 7:12-16//Heb. 1:5; Isa. 9:6-7; Lk. 1:32-33; and Acts 2:30-32.

²⁰ Lk. 1:33; Heb. 1:8-9; and Rev. 11:15.

²¹ 1 Cor. 15:23-28.

²² See Matt. 22:30; Mk. 12:23; Lk. 14:14; 20:34-36; Jn. 5:28-29; and 11:25.

“¹Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, ²by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. ³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”

Those who proclaim a gospel that is void of the necessity to be raised after death are the same ones who preach a false gospel.

There is absolutely no biblical evidence of linkage between the resurrection of one’s body and a person’s supposed immortal soul. Despite this simple observation, most people confuse the two, mistaking one as a synonym for the other. In reality, this mistaken connection between the scriptural great hope of being resurrected from the dead and the satanic lie concerning one’s immortal soul is the renunciation of the former—scriptural fact—in favor of the latter—the diabolical lie. Does any biblical author state when an immortal soul is reunited with a spiritual resurrected body? It is never recorded; for there is no such thing as an imaginary immortal soul to be reunited with a spiritual resurrected body.

Rejection of God’s Decree

Despite the fact that during funerals the deceased lies 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” as a result of sin. Whereas God’s evidence lies pitifully decaying in the coffin, many if not most people from the commonest man to the most scholarly individual still defiantly reject His decree: “You shall surely die.”

Scores of worldly euphemisms exist referring indirectly to the harsh reality of the death of our loved ones; however, none of them occur in the Scriptures. These are some that I have heard during funeral services over the years, and from supposed Christians. Sadly, for all practical purposes to the attending people, they eviscerate the importance of the individual’s resurrection: he/she “crossed/passed over,” “passed on,” “passed away,” “entered into their eternal rest with the Lord,” “entered into the presence of our Lord,” “departed for heaven,” “went to a better place,” “entered heaven and talking with their husband/wife,” “went to their reward in the sky,” and “answered God’s calling.” Only once during a gravesite burial was anything remotely proclaimed that resembled God’s remedy for death: “we are standing on resurrection ground.”²³

²³ This comment was made at the gravesite of Carol Neal, who died on Sunday, June 15, 2003. Although we may grieve over the death of a beloved friend, and in this instance a sister in the Lord, we are not to “grieve as do the rest who have no hope” [of a resurrection] (1 Thess. 4:13).

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. As an example, prayers are offered to Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the patron saints who intercede on their behalf to God. At funeral services the grieving are regularly comforted falsely that their loved-one is still alive and with Jesus in heaven, walking together on the streets of gold among the pearly gates. In other ways than religiously, the immortality of the soul is substantiated by necromancy,²⁴ stirring stories of reincarnation, close-death experiences of an individual, at which time they saw/talked with parents/friends in heaven, or by the warm heartfelt story of a loving parent smiling down from heaven upon their child's achievements.²⁵

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.

Satan's Big Lie

This is the lie that has allured the human race from the beginning (John 8:44):²⁶ "Not—you shall surely die." Satan's sinister scheme could not have succeeded better. Instead of accepting the LORD's judgment because of sin, "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

²⁴ 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).

²⁵ During the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, Joannie Rochette's mother unexpectedly died shortly before Joannie's qualifying round and her bronze medal performance in free skating. During several interviews on NBC, the interviewers tried to lift Joannie's spirits by stating that her mother must be proud of her as she smiles down from heaven. Those believing this seemingly heartfelt sentiment should then also realize that her mother can view her daughter experiencing the most intimate moments with her spouse, including sexual intercourse! How ludicrous is that? But, for one reason or another, people do not wish to champion that theoretical and gross absurdity (as well as many other possible detestable and farcical scenarios). In reality, the newscasters' innocent statement further promoted the satanic lie on national television, being mascaared as worldly sincere sentiment, which lie one must believe to comfort oneself when there is not the hope of their resurrection.

²⁶ 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 that 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. The Gospel demands a changed life according to Jesus, but this truth is largely rejected by God's people today.

die.²⁷ 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 a vicious and insidious virus, infecting most cultures. With some notable exceptions, its popularity gained extensive approval among respected worldly philosophers, educators and religious leaders.

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 Times 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 and not spiritual attributes? When God is not believed concerning the dead, people are willing to believe and makeup anything—even shamefully perhaps by some of His own people.²⁸

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.²⁹ 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.³⁰ Thus, "the blessed hope"³¹ is outrageously substituted for a person's imaginary immortal soul that ascends into heaven at death.

Furthermore, 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.

²⁷ The Scriptures emphatically state the one "who alone possesses immortality" is God (1 Timothy 6:15). In the resurrected body, man will only be clothed with immortality, but Scripture never states that they possess it (1 Corinthians 15:52-54). Even in the Garden of Eden, the first man and woman would have had to eat from the Tree of Life so that their mortal nature would be sustained (Genesis 3:22).

²⁸ One should also ponder the question, if one possesses an immortal soul, then where does it reside in Man? The answer to this question should be clearly understood before any medical surgery! Furthermore, where does Scripture ever state when an immortal soul is reunited with the resurrected spiritual body? It doesn't, because Man does not possess an immortal soul.

²⁹ 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).

³⁰ 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, then I will go to Him. This reasoning inadvertently makes Jesus' statements about His return untrue.

³¹ 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."

²⁶If 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. The Gospel demands a changed life. 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?

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 passionately advocated 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 as “biblical truth” and unswerving taught in both Protestant and Roman Catholic churches for many centuries.

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 a 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.³² 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. The apostle Paul states in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 the account of Jesus’ death for our sins and that He was raised: ³“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴and He was buried, and He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.” Never do the Scriptures state that Jesus ascended into heaven between His death and resurrection. In other words, Jesus did not die and ascend into heaven apart from first being raised from the dead, which is of first importance.

Like a sentry, Satan tenaciously guards his redefining of “death” (i.e., spiritual 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

³² Man is scripturally presented always as a physical being before resurrection. Therefore, one should not expect that man could die a “spiritual death,” for he is NOT a spirit or a spiritual entity. In all Man’s complexities, including memories, feelings and thoughts, are wholly physical which properly reflects on the Creator’s genius. Therefore, man can only die a physical death, that is, before the resurrection.

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 for those who have ears to hear.³³

For example, hours before Jesus' crucifixion, He encouraged His apostles in the Upper Room with the following words:

¹“Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. ²In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, (there) you may be also” (John 14:1-3).

I have heard the above scriptural portion read many times from the pulpit. And yet, it is as if people do not have ears to hear Jesus' words to His apostles. Verse 3 is an irrefutable statement by Jesus that He will COME AGAIN and at that time will take into close association³⁴ His apostles so that where He is, they too may be. Now we only need to ask, “Has Jesus returned for His apostles?” The answer is, “No!”—but He certainly will one day. Since Jesus has not yet returned, then His apostles are NOT yet with Him, and they remain in their graves until their resurrection, at which time they will be raised with an imperishable spiritual body and will be in a joint association with Him—just as Jesus promised them.

Believers' Final Destination

Furthermore, every believers' destination after their resurrection is not heaven, but to be where Jesus is! And where will Jesus be? Revelation 11:15-18 tells us.

¹⁵Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdom of the world has become of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign into the ages.’ ¹⁶And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷saying, ‘We give You thanks, “O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign. ¹⁸And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the holy ones and those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth”’.”

Jesus as the “Firstfruits”

³³ A [concordance listing](#) for *nephesh* (Hebrew term for a “living being”) 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 text and three English translations.

³⁴ The Greek 1st singular future middle indicative verb παραλήμψομαι (*paralēmpsomai*) in this context means “to take into close association, *take (to oneself), take with/along*” (BDAG, s.v. παραλήμψομαι; 1:767).

In 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, Apostle Paul instructs that Christ in his spiritual bodily resurrection is the “firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”

“²⁰But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead came also through a human being. For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be brought to life, ²³but each one in proper order: Christ the firstfruits; then, at his coming, those who belong to Christ.”

Thus, Jesus’ resurrection and the resurrection of those who belong to Him are inseparably bound together, although being separated temporally.

What to Believe

It may seem utterly unbelievable that the satanic “Big Lie” can be so convincingly persuasive to incalculable billions of people for so many years, so what is being proposed in this introductory essay is inconceivable. It is hopeful nevertheless that the reader will begin to seriously consider the compelling contrary scriptural evidence that has been thus far presented that Man does not possess an immortal soul. Other essays concerning the same topic will follow in due time. Some will layout clear biblical evidence of man’s mortality and death due to sin; other essays will forcefully take to task the supposed biblical references cited by those who believe in an immortal soul.

God does not require us to believe human speculation, philosophy, or fairytales, but in His revelation. What a tragedy through the centuries God’s supposed leaders have failed clearly to teach man’s mortality and the reality of death and the absolute necessity for the resurrection. 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, many if not most people 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 the Body of Christ is supposed to proclaim!

Only Jesus Has Ascended

Jesus Christ is presently in the heavenly holy Sanctuary as the High Priest for His people to make propitiation for their sins (Hebrews 2:17).³⁵ 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 concocted idea that after death an individual’s immortal soul ascends to the heavenly tabernacle and into the Holy Sanctuary is absurd. If

³⁵ See also Hebrews 7:26-27, 8:1-6, 9:11-14 and 23-28. The services of a priest are only for the redeemed people of God. There was no tabernacle, no priesthood, no sacrifice and no worship in Egypt. These were instituted for a people redeemed by the blood of the Passover Lamb, and brought out into the wilderness. In like manner, the high priesthood of the Son of God is only for those who have been redeemed by His precious blood, the true Paschal Lamb. This matter concerning Jesus making propitiation for the sons of God’s people is greatly amplified further in Hebrews 9 and 10.

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.³⁶

The earthly tabernacle was a copy of the heavenly one as attested by Hebrews 8:5 (cf. Ex. 25:40) and 9:23-26, and thus the heavenly Tabernacle is a sacrificial one. However, when Jesus vacates that most Holy Sanctuary into which He entered once-for-all (Heb. 9:12) and appears a second time, it will be “for salvation without [reference to] sin, to those who eagerly await Him” (Heb. 9:28). Jesus will never need again to enter into the heavenly Sanctuary—nor will He, for His work of making propitiation for His people’s sins will have been completed. I fear that most individuals do not even know of the Lord’s present ministry as High Priest and for what purpose, or where He presently is, except for the expected nebulous response of “somewhere in heaven (at the right hand of God).”

Despite the biblical teaching of Jesus’ present ministry, most people deceptively are glaringly unaware of the scriptural contradictions commonly espoused in their own doctrinal statements, such as: “souls of the redeemed are absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the resurrection, when spirit and soul and body are reunited to be glorified.”³⁷

What single authoritative scriptural reference can anyone offer that actually substantiates that “spirit and soul” are “in conscious bliss” or awaiting the resurrection “when spirit and soul and body are reunited to be glorified”? The Scriptures never do speak of these things or events. Nevertheless, this does not shake the church’s leadership and their confidence from overtly casting out “the heretic,” and thus forcibly muting by fear tactics anyone else who dares to raise a question or objection concerning their “Holy Grail,” i.e., the doctrinal statement.³⁸

³⁶ When Jesus ascended into the heavenly Tabernacle, He did not cease to be the LORD’s servant; but was appointed by God as His peoples’ high priest (Heb. 5:10), thus He took up an entirely different service in a different place. Jesus became, and now is, the servant of the heavenly Sanctuary and of the true Tabernacle in heaven, whereof the earthly tabernacle pitched by Moses, and in which Aaron ministered in the wilderness, was but a “shadow” or “figure” of the true heavenly Tabernacle (Heb. 4:14-16; 8:1-2; 9:24). The subject of Jesus’ high priesthood should be the deepest interest to God’s people, especially since it is of immediate importance. For it relates to the time now present. It relates to their present circumstances as “in the world,” which corresponds to the wilderness where the Aaronic priesthood was established. Furthermore, the subject relates to the present sins, trials, needs and dangers of God’s people. And most importantly, it directs their thoughts to what their Lord is actually doing on their behalf at the present time.

³⁷ [Constitution and Doctrinal Statement](#), Article 2, Section 15. Sherwood Bible Church of Kansas City, MO, accessed and retrieved from their website on July 2, 2016.

³⁸ I speak from vast experience. I also morosely find ironic that most doctrinal statements decry as their first Article of Faith something about the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures in the original texts and languages, and then many (if not all) of the following statements do not properly reflect what the Scriptures actually teach. I wonder how many who sign and advocate such doctrinal statements have even once read the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation. Moreover, if they believe in the verbal and plenary Scriptures, then they painstakingly undertake a thorough study of the Hebrew and Greek languages so that they can read the inspired Scriptures that they say they believe? Although this is ironically the present state of affairs, it is nevertheless very heartbreaking to me. Adolf Hitler’s infamous statement is repetitiously proven among those who purport to be God’s people: “If you tell a big enough lie and tell it frequently enough, it will be believed.” People usually never suspect church leaders, for they reason, “How can my godly spiritual leader be so impudent to distort

Furthermore, since Jesus is enthroned in the heavenly holy Sanctuary as the crowned High Priest (Heb. 2:7)—and scripturally supported as the only man who authoritatively can be there—further necessitates that the “spirit and soul” of all the redeemed dead would also be present with Him. Again, when pressed for scriptural confirmation, the throngs’ never-ceasing mantra supplants the scriptural silence by inserting any nonsense they wish and lay it before the naïve as biblical “truth.”³⁹

Take time and deeply contemplate the words of the Apostle John that were recorded many years after Jesus’ resurrection and ascension into the heavenly Sanctuary:

“And no one (καὶ οὐδεὶς) has ascended (ἀναβέβηκεν) into heaven, except (εἰ μὴ) He who descended from heaven (ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς): the Son of Man” (υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου) (John 3:13).⁴⁰

In v. 13, the Apostle John begins to instruct his readers concerning Jesus’ and Nicodemus’ previous dialogue in vv. 1-12 concerning the resurrection (to be born again or from above), and his instruction continues all the way through 3:21. This is evident because his discourse is all in third person, which clearly marks the departure from the first and second person (“I,” “you,” and “we”) discourse between Jesus and Nicodemus in the previous verses.

“And no one has ascended into heaven, except He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man.”

The Apostle unequivocally states that “no one has ascended into heaven” except for Jesus who is the “Son of Man.”⁴¹ John first begins his statement with a universal decree that “no one” has ascended into heaven. Next, the powerful counter-point subordinate exclusionary statement (“except for the Son of Man”) eliminates anyone else other than Jesus ascending into heaven.

Please notice that aspects of the very important terms “ascend,” “heaven,” and “Son of Man” are employed in John 3:13. These are the three primary ideas of most who passionately but erroneously state that after their death, they will ascend into heaven and be with Jesus (=

the truth and mislead me?” What they do not realize is that their “spiritual leader” and countless of billions others have also been deceived in believing the “Big Lie,” namely, that Man possess an immortal soul and therefore cannot die (Gen. 3:4; Jn. 8:44).

³⁹ It is not that the proponents of an immortal soul do not cite snippets of scriptural references (such as Lk 23:43 and 2 Cor. 5:8), but it is that what the author is speaking of is wholly taken out of context of his overall work. In due time, the many possible objections that have been historically advanced against this essay’s thesis will be fully and compellingly answered.

⁴⁰ The Red Letter editions of the ESV and NASB indicate that Jesus spoke these words and those that follow to the end of 3:21 (note: the 2011 edition of the NIV indicates that Jesus continued to speak to Jn. 3:15). However, The Greek 3rd singular perfect active indicative verb ἀναβέβηκεν (anabébēken, “upward movement *ascend, go up*”; BDAG, s.v. ἀναβαίνω; 1.a.β:58) clearly signifies that Jesus did not state that He had already ascended while speaking to Nicodemus in Jerusalem. The perfect aspect here indicates that the Son of Man’s descent (καταβάς, nominative masculine singular aorist active participle < καταβαίνω) precedes His ascent.

⁴¹ Scripture designates sixty-nine times in the Synoptic Gospels that Jesus is the “Son of Man.” Among these references, Jesus referred to Himself three times as the “Son of Man.”

the “Son of Man”), which clearly contradicts what the Apostle recorded in his Gospel: “No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended, the Son of Man.” Even for Jesus, He first had to be resurrected before His ascension.

However, most people believe that the Scriptures are not inspired enough. For this reason, they invent terms and phrases that are never based nor found in the Scriptures to justify not submitting to God’s original decree, which because of disobedience is the cause of one’s death.

Further Pauline Scriptural Remarks

I began this essay with Paul’s succinct statement from 1 Corinthians 15:18 that unless those who belong to Christ are resurrected, they would perish from existence after their death. Furthermore in the same chapter, Paul explains that when those who belong to Christ are raised with an imperishable spiritual body, they are also clothed at some time later with immortality (1 Cor. 15:53, 54). The importance of this cannot go unnoticed. First, why would beings who are supposed to be already immortal need to be clothed with “immortality”? Second, the imagery of being clothed indicates that neither then, nor now, does any earthly human being innately possess immortality; for the figure of speech of being clothed clearly indicates that even in the resurrection immortality is NOT an intrinsic or inherit part of human nature. God alone possesses immortality (1 Tim. 6:16)—and He always will. The best that any of us can say who belong to Christ is that we put on immortality⁴² after our resurrection from the dead.

The Soul Is Not Spiritual

If you have read this introductory essay thus far, then the thought might have arisen that I am advocating something that has been popularized as “soul sleep.” Nothing could be further from the truth. First, the Scriptures never use the phrase “soul sleep,” therefore it is impossible to define biblically; and second, the term “soul” is commonly used in the Scriptures to indicate that which is hidden from sight, although constitutionally part of the necessary workings of the inner physical body. For example, Matthew 6:25 records an instance that Jesus said during one of His discourses:

“For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your soul (ψυχή) what you will eat or what you will drink; nor [be worried] for your body, what you will put on. Is not the soul (ψυχή) more than food and the body more than clothing?”

Should one now advocate the doctrine that a supposed immaterial and immortal soul needs physical food? Absolutely not—not any more than it needs to sleep!⁴³ Jesus’ parallelism is

⁴² It is obvious that clothing is not part of any human’s essential nature. It is something that is worn on the outside of the body, and thus not part of the human’s essential nature.

⁴³ I inserted a little sarcasm here to make a point. During discussions concerning this topic, people cannot seem to fathom that the God who created the heavens and the earth and all that is contained therein, the God “who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist” [Rom. 4:17b]), cannot resurrect anyone who does not have an immortal

unmistakable. The “soul” is associated with food and drink as clothing is to the outward body. Once one eats or drinks something, it “disappears” into the inner body where the nutrients interdependently sustain the skeletal, integumentary/exocrine, muscular, nervous (including the brain), endocrine, cardiovascular/circulatory, lymphatic, respiratory, digestive, renal/urinary, and the reproductive systems, all of which is necessary for the physical body’s life to be sustained.

The *psychē* (a transliteration for the Greek term “soul” [ψυχή]) in the above cited verse of Matthew 6:25 is contextually a person’s hidden digestive system, and not something immaterial or spiritual in nature. Jesus’ corresponding statements are irrefutable: food and drink is to the *psychē* as clothing is to the body—yet both pertain to the entire individual as a whole. The former is a person’s hidden bodily functions and the latter, the external—and yet, both constitute qualities of the physical realm of the individual!

Interestingly, many English translations substitute in this verse the word “life” for that of “soul”; therefore making it nearly impossible to grasp that *psychē* might be something other than immortal or immaterial.

What this essay does promote is simply this: apart from the resurrection, there is not any possibility of life of any kind after death, just as Jesus and the apostles repeatedly proclaimed and is recorded again and again in the Scriptures. Furthermore, I advocate exactly what is recorded in Genesis 2:7, that man—the entire being—became a “living *nephesh*” (commonly translated as “living soul” or “living being”), and that God created the Man from the earthly physical elements; hence he is earthy, mortal, and natural.⁴⁴

When Will We Meet Our Loved Ones?

In contrast to the pseudo-Christian belief that a believer’s immortal soul ascends to heaven after death to meet loved ones that have proceeded, the Scriptures makes it clear that this reunion will only occur after one is raised from the dead.

“¹²So death works in us, but life in you. ¹³But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, ‘I believed, therefore I spoke,’ we also believe, therefore we also speak,

soul. If what they purport is their belief system, then their god is not the God of the Scriptures. Furthermore, I have asked people who believe in “soul-sleep” to define it. The consensus is that a person’s immortal soul “sleeps” until the time of the future resurrection. My question is then, why would an immortal soul need to sleep? By definition, an “immortal soul” is impervious to any consequences of death. In other words, if it is not asleep before death, what necessitates that it be asleep after the death of the body? Does the “God who alone possesses immortality” (1 Tim. 6:16) ever sleep? I cannot imagine anyone being able to sleep well at night with a clear conscience that sees these glaring contradictions and teaches them to people.

⁴⁴ This is Paul’s description of man before a spiritual bodily resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:42-49. Furthermore, the exact same Hebrew phrase “living *nephesh*” was also used previously to describe God’s creation of all air-breathing beings and not just man, and has been erroneously translated as “living creatures” in many translations (Gen. 1:20; 21, 24, 30). This is an important common denominator between Man and all other beings—they breathe air. Plants do not share this characteristic. Hence, the noun *nephesh* comes from the Hebrew verb “to breathe.” However, Scripture never states that any animals are the subject of a resurrection.

¹⁴knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise also us and will present us with Jesus with you.”

When will the Apostle Paul and Timothy (the “we” and “us”) be reunited with the Corinthians and also the Lord Jesus? The time will be when God raises them from the dead—and then, and only then, they and Jesus will be presented to them. What a glorious reunion that will be!

And Finally . . .

Contrary to popular opinion, the Scriptures do not often address the final outcome of the “outsiders”;⁴⁵ 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).⁴⁶

The most detail account 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

⁴⁵ Paul uses a substantial adverbial phrase, “the outsiders” (τοὺς ἔξω/toὺς éxsō) 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.”

⁴⁶ Note that Apostle Paul does not include an intermediary state between Christ’s death and His resurrection. Christ did not immediately ascend into the heavenly Sanctuary after His death. Before Jesus’ ascension, “He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3). Paul makes it patently clear later in 1 Corinthians 15 that the transition from a physical body to a spiritual one is only attained by the resurrection: “⁴⁴It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual one . . . ⁴⁶However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual” (vv. 44, 46). Not once does the Scripture ever proclaim an intermediary state between the physical and the spiritual bodies. Before a person’s death, it is physical, and then it is spiritual after a person’s resurrection. Between one’s death and resurrection, the physical body normally deteriorates slowly into dust. During this phrase, the body is still physical and is referred to as a dead person or corpse forty-three times in the Hebrew text (such as in Lev. 21:1; 22:4; Num. 5:2; 6:11; 9:6, 7, 10; 19:11, 13, 16, 18; Deut. 14:21; 21:2, 3, 6, 22, 23; Josh. 8:29; 1 Sam. 31:10; Matt. 14:12; 24:28; Mk. 6:29; 15:45, etc.; the EVV may). Nor does the Scripture ever mention that a supposed immortal soul is reunited to a spiritual body after a person’s physical death and their resurrection. Of course it doesn’t state such a cultic idea, because it never happens. It is the theologians, teachers and most churchgoers that espouse this irrelevant, fanciful and spurious idea. A person will generally believe a lie that is told over and over and over.

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 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 heralded (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.⁴⁷ To those addressed in the assembly of Smyrna, take special note that it was the exalted 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" (Revelation 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?

An Important Challenge

I would be short-sighted not to lay forth several emotional barriers that will hinder the reader from embracing the undeniable truths of Scripture laid out in this essay that resurrection is the only means to transition from an unqualified death to a spiritual imperishable life.

First, in the face of the solemn finality and grief of death, the false teaching of the souls of loved ones being in heaven provides a measure of comfort to those in grief. Death is awful and the loss of those we love can bring unbearable grief. Through the centuries, various cultures and religions have tried to find comfort in various religious systems and philosophies, most of which

⁴⁷ 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."

focus on an afterlife after death. The universality of death has provoked a universal search for a means of comfort.

Also, when we face the death of loved ones, friends and acquaintances, we are also confronted with our own inevitable death. Who has not attended a funeral and had thoughts about their own death? The erroneous teaching of a supposed departed soul being in heaven can provide comfort for a person who is contemplating their own impending death.

However, the comfort that the lie from Satan provides is a false comfort, a fabrication that masks the true nature of death and the only hope one has for life after death. God's word to the first man and woman was that they would die if they transgressed His will. His command is validated with every single death. Death, therefore, should serve as a reminder of the penalty for sin as well as a motivator to embrace God's provision through His Son, Jesus Christ, who can enable us to overcome sin and be raised to life.

Satan's lie also conceals the truth that those who die and who do not belong to Christ are no longer enduring pain and not suffering in a fictional hell. They are truly in a better place, death. How many have unnecessarily experienced severe anguish believing that their loved ones are suffering a specious eternal torment?

Another barrier that hinders embracing the truth concerning death and resurrection is the realization that those who have taught us have been wrong. It can be difficult to believe that pastors, religious leaders, and authors of books and resources that we have respected, have instructed us incorrectly. So pervasive is Satan's lie that it has permeated seminaries and Bible schools, which are primarily responsible for instructing future pastors and religious leaders. Due to curriculum and time demands, most students in religious academia do not have time to study and think for themselves but are assimilating the instruction presented to them in order to pass exams and graduate. Thus, they are taught what to think and not so much as how to think. After graduation, the demands of sermon preparation, caring for their flock, and loving their own families, prevent most from serious self-study of the Scriptures. And if some do begin to study and question the information they have been taught, the weight of the consequences for embracing the truth can provoke intense fear and anxiety. Most will choose to continue to embrace a lie rather than the truth.

They, along with us, must determine if we are going to believe the Scriptures or not. Since the Scriptures are the inspired word of God, as most church-goers claim to believe, we should make it our primary priority to understand what the Scriptures teach, believe it and live accordingly. This will require us to read the text alone, not the study notes in our Bibles, devotional books and commentaries, while praying, "God, open my eyes and teach me Your word." By God's grace, such a pursuit may lead us to the truth which we then have to determine if we believe, regardless of what those presently in authority may have taught us.

This writer has pursued that course of action for many years, and gratefully has come to understand the truth the Scriptures teach regarding death and resurrection. Dear reader, the

choice before you is simple, will you believe the authoritative Scriptures or the lie of Satan? Will you believe the inspired Scriptures or religious and philosophical teachings and traditions?

John 11:21-26 records a dialogue that Jesus has with Martha, after arriving at Bethany, and three days after the death of her brother Lazarus.

²¹“Martha then said to Jesus, ‘Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You’. ²³Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again’. ²⁴Martha said to Him, ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day’. ²⁵Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die in the age. Do you believe this?’”

This dialogue between Maratha and Jesus encapsulates the scriptural truth of death and our hope of life after death, resurrection. The searching question that Jesus asked Martha, “Do you believe this (truth)?” Dear reader, do you?

I now close the *Introduction* with the following poem by H. A. Owens. 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 and brother in the Lord, [Iain MacMillan](#).

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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All scriptural quotes other than noted are from the *The Holy Bible: Update New American Standard Bible Containing The Old Testament and The New Testament* (Zondervan, 1995).

