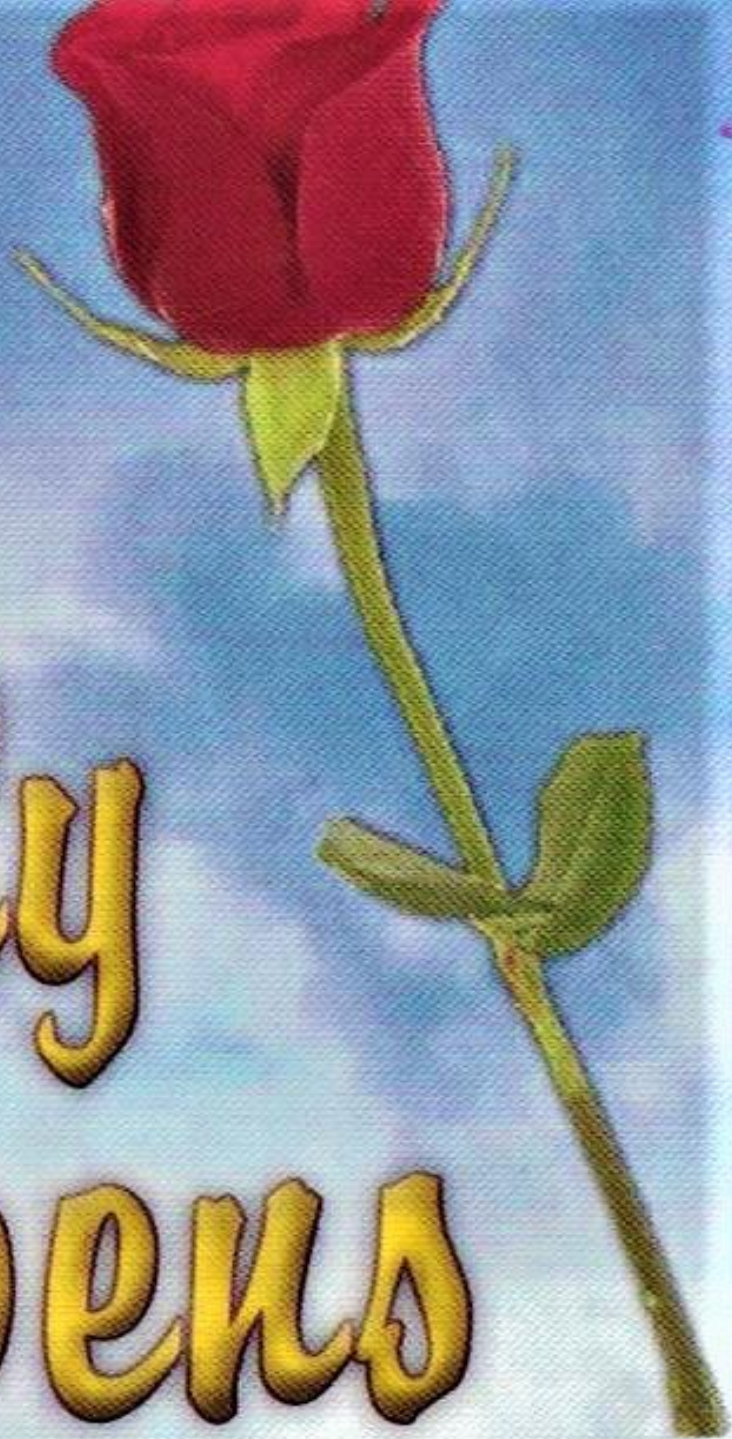


What
Really
Happens
At Death



**FOR MORE INFORMATION,
AND OR ANYTHING ELSE,
PLEASE CONTACT:**

MOBILE: 0404 881 885.

INTERNATIONAL: 61 404 881 885.

WEB SITE: www.freeliteraturemultimedia.org

EMAIL: freeliteraturemultimedia@gmail.com

**POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 220, MUNDARING,
WESTERN AUSTRALIA, 6073.**

"I'll give you a million dollars for each year you can add to my life," a wealthy American said to his medical advisers when he was eighty years old.

"Millions of dollars for an inch of time!" cried Queen Elizabeth I, the queen of England in 1603, upon her dying bed. She was an unhappy woman, reclining upon a couch.

She had ten thousand dresses in her wardrobe and, at her command, a kingdom on which the sun never set—all now valueless. She had lived 70 years and ruled 44 years. But, somehow, she never had time for Christ in her life.

In contrast Queen Victoria, on her deathbed, called for her beloved hymn to be sung: "Rock of Ages, cleft for me. Let me hide myself in Thee." "It is enough," she said, "I am still with Him and will see Him at the resurrection!" She had lived 82 years and ruled 63 years; yet, amid all her activities, each day anew, she made Christ her personal Saviour.

The two most important queens in British history—yet how differently did each of their lives end!

Some time ago, a businessman was seated at his **dinner table reading aloud a letter** he had just received from a friend. He read: "And so his illness grew suddenly worse until the doctors admitted that they could do nothing for him. A few weeks later he died." Then—

"Daddy, what does 'die' mean?" asked his little girl, looking up from her plate. Everyone at the table said nothing. They could think of nothing to say. Yet few subjects are more clearly explained in the Bible.

The ancient Christians of Rome, so heavily persecuted for their faith, would gather about their loved ones in the catacombs as they were dying, and sing, "Good night, beloved, sleep and take your rest. Lay down your head upon the Saviour's breast."

When death comes, some are ready, and some are not. This chapter will give you information you need to know. *It will help you get ready.*

WHAT IS MORTAL AND IMMORTAL?

Men wish they could live forever, but they are mortal. The word means "subject to death, destined to die." In contrast, the word, "immortal," means "not mortal; exempt from liability to die; imperishable; everlasting" (*Webster's New International Dictionary*).

Did God plan that sinless man, created in the image of God, should die? All will agree that He did not.

God made man to live.

However, our Creator did not purpose that man should live if he sinned. This is how it was explained to Adam:

"Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."—*Genesis 2:17*.

The Hebrew original reads "dying thou shalt die." This means **the day you eat it you will begin to die; and, after a time, you will be entirely dead.** The sentence of death would be pronounced the day that man sinned, and the process of dying would immediately begin.

Denying this definite statement of God's, Satan told

Eve, "**Ye shall not surely die**" (*Genesis 3:4*). But Christ said the devil was a liar (*John 8:44*).

Eve believed the words of Satan because they seemed more pleasant than the words of God. Men and women are still doing that.

The evening of the day that our first parents chose to sin, God told them, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (*Genesis 3:19*).

However, there was another tree in the garden, the fruit of which would extend life, if one continued to eat of it. This was the Tree of Life. But Adam and Eve were told that they would have to leave the Garden of Eden; for they could no longer be permitted to eat of the life-sustaining tree.

WHO HAS IMMORTALITY?

Mark this in your mind: **The Bible teaches that God clearly said that sinners would not live forever.** Even though it may be taught from a thousand pulpits, and printed in many books, the Bible says sinners will not live forever.

So, from what we have learned already, man was created with the possibility of immortality, on condition that he meet the test of obedience. **But he was not created with inherent immortality.** He was "subject to death" if he sinned, and was therefore "mortal." **There are no immortal sinners** and never will be, regardless of what anyone tells you.

About man, the Bible says, "Shall mortal man be more just than God?" (*Job 4:17*).

About God, the good Book says, "Who only hath immortality" (*1 Timothy 6:16*).

In other words, God is immortal and man is mortal. In fact, the word "immortal" is found but once in the Bible and is applied to God:

"Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory forever and ever"—*1 Timothy 1:17*.

Man does not have innate (inherent) immortality.

The theory of the natural immortality of the soul originated in paganism, and was adopted into the Christian church by the apostate church in the Dark Ages. Martin Luther said it was one of the "monstrous fables that form part of the Roman dunghill of decretals" (*quoted in E. Petavel, The Problem of Immortality, p. 255*). Commenting on the words of Solomon in *Ecclesiastes 9:5-6*, that the dead know not anything, the Reformer wrote:

"[This is] another place proving that the dead have no . . . feeling. There is, saith he, no duty, no science, no knowledge, no wisdom there. Solomon judgeth that the dead are asleep, and feel nothing at all. For the dead lie there, accounting neither days nor years, but when they are awaked, they shall seem to have slept scarce one minute."—*Martin Luther, Exposition of Solomon's Book Called Ecclesiastes, p. 152*.

The Bible clearly reveals the truth of the matter. Here are four facts it presents us with:

Man only is mortal.

"Shall mortal man be more just than God?"—*Job 4:17*.

God is immortal.

"Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible."—*1 Timothy 1:17*.

Only God has immortality.

"Who only hath immortality."—*1 Timothy 6:16*.

Man must seek for immortality.

"To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life"—*Romans 2:7*.

WHO WILL RECEIVE IMMORTALITY?

The possibility of receiving immortality is only possible through the gospel; that is, through Christ.

"Our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."—*2 Timothy 1:10*.

It will not be given until the Second Advent, and only to God's faithful followers.

"Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"—*1 Corinthians 15:51-55*.

In view of these Bible facts, it is strange that some

still imagine that man has something immortal about him which not even God can destroy. This is stranger than the king's scientists who were talked into believing that $10 + 5 = 10$.

SOUL NOT SEPARATE FROM THE BODY

Man does not have a separate "living soul." However, someone will say, "But man is a living soul, and therefore cannot die." Well, what does the Bible say about this? Here is the record:

"The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; **and man became a living soul.**"—*Genesis 2:7*.

First, God made Adam's body from the dust of the ground. Any scientist will tell you that we consist of minerals to be found in the ground and in the air.

Second, God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life. Here is **no indication of any "immortal soul" being put into Adam**. No such "spirit Adam" ever existed. None was here created. God simply breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

As a result, "man became a living soul."

Body + breath of life = a living soul! Note carefully: God did not breathe into Adam a living soul, but only the breath of life. As a result, the man became a living soul.

By itself an electric light bulb gives no light. But, when electricity is sent into its inner wiring, light is produced.

Adam's body, lying on the ground, was useless until God switched on the current of life—and Adam became a living, active, functioning living soul.

Only while the switch is on does man have life and a soul.

SOUL AND SPIRIT

The Hebrew and Greek words from which we translate our English words, soul and spirit, are found about 1,700 times in the Bible. Actually the word, soul, as used in the Bible, does not always have exactly the same meaning. The same holds true of the word, spirit.

But in not one of the 1,700 places is either soul or spirit said to be immortal, never dying, imperishable, indestructible, everlasting, eternal, or having immortality.

Nor are the dead said to have a conscious existence apart from the body.

Did you know that, in the Bible, animals also have "the breath of life" (*Genesis 7:15*)? This is because they are also living beings. In *Genesis 7:22*, margin, they are said to have "the breath of the spirit of life." (Actually, the words, "breath" and "spirit," which come from the same Hebrew word, are interchangeable in many passages. For example, *James 2:26* has "the body without the spirit is dead." In the margin, we find "breath" instead: "The body without the breath is dead." It is the breath which keeps the body alive. In *Job 27:3*, we read: "All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils." The margin says it (the spirit) may be translated "breath." Just like us, an animal may have a perfect body, but it may be perfectly dead. It also must have the current of life switched on, in order to be alive.

We are told that animals also have life (*Genesis*

1:30). The margin of that passage reads "a living soul" instead of "life."

WE NEED ETERNAL LIFE!

When God breathed life into Adam, He was putting life into the masterpiece of earthly creation. Our bodies and minds are amazing! The psalmist said:

"I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are Thy works."—*Psalms 139:14*.

Indeed, we are even told that we are not far below the angels!

"What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour."—*Psalms 8:4-5*.

Yet man is nothing without life. What he needs is eternal life!

We can only have life—life that lasts forever—through a connection with Jesus Christ! Here is what the Bible teaches about this:

"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son.

"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."—*1 John 5:11-12*.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not

perish, but have everlasting life."—*John 3:16*.

Only Jesus "hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (*2 Timothy 1:10*).

We can conclude that **man does not, by nature, possess an immortal soul.** It takes the body and the spirit (or breath) of life together to make a living soul.

Christ came to save all there is of man. For this to be done we must let Him sanctify all there is of us.

In order to possess immortality, man must acquire it; and, since immortality is an attribute of God, it can be obtained by man only as a gift from the One who possesses it. This is why Paul declared that the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

"Who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life."—*Romans 2:6-7*.

It is the way of the cross which leads to immortality.

Christ gave us the promise:

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—*Revelation 2:10*.

He also said:

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it."—*Matthew 16:25*.

That is a sentence worth thinking about a long time.

Christ is telling us, "You cannot have life, unless you come to Me." "Please come," He says, "I am waiting!" Submission and willing obedience to God's will is the only road to holiness, heaven, and immortality.

THE JOURNEY TO DEATH

What happens when a man dies? We want to find out. Only the Bible can tell us the truth of the matter.

Dr. Alexander Bogomoletz was a Russian scientist who believed he could devise a serum which would retard the aging of the body's connective tissues. This scientist was determined to extend human life to 150 years.

He called his chemical solution ACS, or "anti-reticular cytotoxic serum." But the doctor died at the age of 64, or 86 years short of the mark. His heart gave out when he took his own serum.

—However, whether a man lives to be 70 or 170, he is still short of what God originally planned for him: a life that measures with the life of God, a life that continues on forever!

And this is still in God's plan! But it is only for those who accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and humbly, obediently, live their lives as truehearted followers of the Lamb of God.

Yet, because of sin, "it is appointed unto men once to die" (*Hebrews 9:27*). That death is the death we all experience. Most men will die twice; Christians, but once.

The unsaved of earth will die twice. The *first death*, which is the common lot of all men, is temporary. **The second death, which will be experienced only by the wicked, will be eternal. The gospel of Christ does not save men from the first death; but it emphatically promises that the righteous "shall not be hurt of the second death," for over them it shall have "no power."** See *Revelation 2:11; 20:6*. More on that second death in the next chapter.

According to a recent U.S. Census Bureau Report, 55.5 million people die every year; 6,300 die every month; and 105 every minute.

"There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death."—*Ecclesiastes 8:8*.

One man has described the journey of life:

"Ten thousand human beings set forth together on their journey. After ten years, at least a third have disappeared.

At the midpoint of the usual measure of life, but half are still on the road.

"Faster and faster the ranks grow thinner. Nearly all that remained until now grow weary and lie down to rise no more.

"At ninety these have been reduced to a handful of trembling patriarchs. . . One lingers, perhaps, a lonely marvel till the century is over. We look again and the work of death is finished."—*Burgess*

"One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. . . Another dieth in the bitterness of his soul" (*Job 21:23, 25*). Death's sharpest impact comes to those with plenty, yet who are unprepared.

"How shocking must thy summons be, O Death, To him that is at ease in his possessions; Who counting on long years of pleasure here, Is quite unfurnished for that world to come!" —*Robert Blair, "The Grave"*

WHAT HAPPENS AT DEATH?

In the beginning—

"The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."—*Genesis 2:7*.

When man was created, **his body was first formed of dust. Then God breathed the breath of life into him and man became "a living soul."** It is the combination of the two (dust and the breath of life) that makes man a "living soul." **He does not have a soul that is separate from his body!** Only while the breath of life is in him, does man have life and a living soul.

When the breath of life is removed at his death, he ceases to be a living soul. He ceases to be alive. Man does not have a separate "spirit," nor does he have immortality.

While he is alive:

Body + breath of life = a living soul

When a man dies:

Body – (minus) breath of life = a dead body

God did not breathe into Adam a living soul, but only the breath of life. As a result, the man became a living soul. At death, the breath of life departed; and there was nothing left but a dead person, who is then buried.

So we see that, **at death, the opposite of the creative process occurs.** First "his breath goeth forth" (*Psalms 146:4*). This is because, as Job explained, "The breath of the Almighty hath given me life" (*Job 33:4*).

And again, "The spirit of God is in my nostrils" (*Job 27:3*).

This is the "spirit of life" which God gives to all men; which, at death, is removed from him. "The spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (*Ecclesiastes 12:7*).

"His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."—*Psalms 146:4*.

(The Hebrew word for "breath" and "spirit" is the same.)

Here is the complete equation in the Bible (when man is given life, and while he has it):

"The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."—*Genesis 2:7*.

Body + breath of life = a living soul

When a man dies, and no longer has life:

"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."—*Ecclesiastes 12:7*.

Body – (minus) breath of life = a dead body

Here is an illustration which will help explain this:

A boy takes six wooden boards, and nails them together.

The result is a box.

Boards + nails = box

Then he removes the nails from the wood, and there is no more box.

Boards – (minus) nails = no box

The box came from the combination of the boards and the nails. **When separated, there is no more box. It did not go anywhere; it just ceased to be a box.**

Now for a second illustration:

Here is a candle. It stands ready to give light, but it has no light of its own. We strike a match and light the wick. Then we have a lighted candle. Blow on the flame

of the candle and it goes out. Where did it go? Out—that is all. And with the passing of the flame, the light also goes out.

Man is like that candle. **It takes divine energy to light him—to impart life to him. God strikes the match and man is a living soul.** Intelligence shines out of that human being. But **when the life is snuffed out of that man, the light goes out. The living soul dies.** Intelligence can no more be a part of that dead man than can the extinguished flame be a part of the candle. Like the flame, the soul, or life, has gone out. The human organization disintegrates in death.

Death is an enemy. It robs us of life. **But death will not reign in this old world forever. Someday its power will be broken, and it too will be destroyed,** never again to haunt the footsteps of a people redeemed from the grave and living with Christ forever.

In God's blessed tomorrow we shall be reunited with loved ones "whom we have loved . . . and lost awhile." We are looking forward to that!

WHERE DOES A MAN GO AT DEATH?

At death, a man goes to the grave and remains there.

"What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?"—*Psalm 89:48*.

"For I know that Thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living."—*Job 30:23*.

"All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn

to dust again."—*Ecclesiastes 3:20*.

HOW MUCH DOES HE KNOW AFTER DEATH?

A lawyer once told a judge that he had eight reasons why his client was not present in court. Then, starting to enumerate them all, he said the first was that his client was dead. Immediately, the judge interrupted him and said he did not need to mention the others, as his first reason was sufficient.

At death, a man's thoughts cease.

"Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."—*Psalm 146:3-4*.

"For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing."—*Ecclesiastes 9:5*.

"For in death there is no remembrance of Thee."—*Psalm 6:5*.

"His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them."—*Job 14:21*.

"If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness."—*Job 17:13*.

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."—*Ecclesiastes 9:10*.

What of the feelings and emotions? Do they also cease at death? —**All a person's thought processes end at death!**

"Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished."—*Ecclesiastes* 9:6.

The Scripture is plain. **When death comes, all thinking and feeling end.** —If they do not, then the Bible is false and unreliable. **Thinking and feeling did not exist before God breathed life into man, and they stop entirely when the man dies.** When the electric current is turned off, the bulb is there, but the light is gone.

There is no probationary opportunity to accept Christ after the grave, for all thought and action has ceased. **If we are to be saved, it must be done during these present probationary hours.** None of us can know how soon we might have an accident and sudden death.

WHERE THE ERROR CAME FROM

Who started the theory of natural immortality?

Who started this peculiar error that man has an immortal soul and lives forever? **It began in ancient Egypt, and spread throughout the world.** The Egyptians believed that man lives forever after death. The Hindus, in India, added to that yet another error—that man has lived forever both before and after he lives here on earth. That is the theory of reincarnation.

But the belief in natural, or innate, immortality actually started with Satan in the Garden of Eden. **God had said, "Thou shalt surely die" (*Genesis* 2:17). The devil said, "Ye shall not surely die" (*Genesis* 3:4).**

Countless millions live in fear and religious tyranny because of the devil's lie, that there is continuing life—and even endless suffering—after death. (More on this

in the next chapter.)

But the Bible teaches that, after man sinned, God removed him from the tree of life, lest he live forever (*Genesis* 3:22-23). God did not purpose to have everlasting sinners.

WHAT IS DEATH LIKE?

It is like a sound sleep. There is no consciousness, for the brain is totally gone. When David is resurrected, it will seem but the next instant after he died: "the twinkling of the eye," as it were.

In the Bible, it is significant that death is called "sleep" 54 times. Paul said this about death:

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."—*1 Thessalonians* 4:13 (also *1 Corinthians* 15:17-22).

The Bible is very certain about this matter: **"The dead know not any thing"** (*Ecclesiastes* 9:5).

The prophet Daniel wrote: "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." *Daniel* 12:2.

Jesus described death in very clear words:

"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said His disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that He had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead."—*John* 11:11-14.

Thomas Gray, in his well-known poem "*Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*," wrote this:

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power, And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave, Await alike the inevitable hour: **The paths of glory lead but to the grave.**

"Can storied urn or animated bust, Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath? Can Honor's voice provoke the silent dust, Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of Death?"

THERE IS HOPE BEYOND THE GRAVE

Is there hope beyond the grave? Yes, there is! for the faithful who, during this life loved God and served Him!

The promise is given us in the Old Testament:

"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction."—*Hosea 13:14*.

Two prominent men were avowed skeptics. One was the eminent Gilbert West; the other was Lord Lyttelton, the famous English statesman. The two men agreed that Christianity should be destroyed. But they decided that, in order to do it, they must disprove His resurrection. If Christ was not raised from the dead, they said, He could not later raise anyone else from the grave.

The two men divided the task between them. At a much later time, they once again met to compare notes.

Both had been confronted with the indisputable facts about the resurrection. Each one confessed that a remarkable change had occurred in his own life as a result

of having, through his study, met the risen Christ—and each had become a confirmed Christian!

THE TRUTH OF THE RESURRECTION

The error, that the righteous dead go to heaven when they die, undermines—and destroys—the great truth of the resurrection!

But the clear teaching of the Bible is that there will be a resurrection. It is as certain as the fact that Christ has already risen from the dead.

"If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

"But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming."—*1 Corinthians 15:17-23*.

Christ is the source of life. If we have Christ, we have the promise of life! There may be an interruption for a time in the silence of the grave; but, afterward, we will have the joyful reunion with Him forever.

Because Christ was raised from the dead, just so surely His faithful ones will one day soon, at Christ's Second Advent, come forth to an eternal, glorious life.

Paul said that "Christ" was "the firstfruits of them

that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:20). Elsewhere he said, "Afterward they that are Christ's at His coming" (verse 23).

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

"Wherefore comfort one another with these words."
—1 Thessalonians 4:16-18.

This is why the resurrection from the dead is the real hope of those who "sorrow not, even as others" (verse 13).

But, in addition, the Apostle Paul made it clear that **Christians who live to see the Second Coming of Christ will go to heaven "together with" the resurrected righteous.**

They will "not prevent [Old English for "go before"] them which are asleep" (verse 15).

Those who have already died will not reach heaven before those who live to see Christ return for His faithful ones.

"God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."—Hebrews 11:40.

Paul said he would receive his reward at Christ's Second Advent, and not before.

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also

that love His appearing."—2 Timothy 4:8.

Peter declared that a thousand years after David's death, he still was not yet in heaven (Acts 2:29, 34).

Paul goes so far as to say that if the dead do not rise, then those who have died believing in Christ are perished; and that is the end of it all (1 Corinthians 15:16-18). **How thankful we can be that, for God's faithful ones, death will not be the end of it all!**

THE TIME TO RECEIVE IMMORTALITY

Christ paid the ransom price, by His death on the cross, so His faithful followers could be redeemed from the grave.

"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction."—Hosea 13:14.

At Christ's return, all His redeemed ones will, for the first time, receive immortality, and will forever keep it!

"Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."—1 Corinthians 15:51-54.

"Blessed rest for the weary righteous! Time, be it

long or short, is but a moment to them. They sleep; they are awakened by the trump of God to a glorious immortality."—*Great Controversy*, 550.

What will God's faithful ones look like when, at Christ's coming, they will become immortal?

Speaking of Christ and His Second Coming, Paul finishes with these words:

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."—*Philippians* 3:20-21.

"Whosoever believeth" on Christ will have "everlasting life" (*John* 3:16). Everlasting life is a gift of God to believers. "I am the way, the truth, and the life," said Jesus (*John* 14:6). It is those who follow Him who shall live eternally.

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand."—*John* 10:27-28.

HOW SHOULD WE PREPARE?

What must we do now in order to receive this eternal life?

We must humbly, obediently, follow the Lamb. We must partake of Christ, as we study His Word and put it into our lives. Through His enabling grace, we must daily become more and more like Him.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."—*John* 6:53-54. (*Read verses 47-59.*)

"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."—1 *John* 5:11-13.

"He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."—*John* 5:24.

An inscription on a crypt in Allegheny Observatory, University of Pittsburgh, reads:

"We have loved the stars too fondly to be fearful of the night." If we have seen Jesus, the Light of the world, the Bright and Morning Star, we need never be fearful of the night of death which is ahead of so many of us.

One day when Michael Faraday, the great scientist, entered his laboratory, he found that one of his workmen had accidentally dropped a little, highly valued silver cup into a strong acid bath. Within a short time it had totally dissolved.

Faraday cast in another acid—and soon all of the silver precipitated in the form of a shapeless mass. In a few days it came back from the silversmith a more

beautiful cup than before.

So it is at death. The bodies of Christ's faithful ones molder into dust and nothing more can be found of them. But when He shall return,—He will restore to each one a more beautiful body—one which is immortal.

The voice of Jesus, sounding as clear as a trumpet, will, at His Second Coming, open the tomb of every saint; and with the righteous living they will be rewarded together with eternal life with Christ.

"At the sounding of the trumpet, when the saints are gathered home, We will greet each other by the crystal sea; When the Lord Himself from heaven to His glory bids them come, What a gathering of the faithful that will be!" *What a gathering of the faithful that will be! It will be greater than any church service you have ever attended!*

Oh, my friend, we must be faithful now, so we can be there at that time!

"Let us sing a song that will cheer us by the way, In a little while we're going home; For the night will end in the everlasting day, In a little while we're going home."

MY COMMITMENT

Oh, my Father in heaven, unless Jesus comes while I am still alive, I am going to die someday. Please, Father, help me to cling daily to Jesus, so I can be raised from the grave to eternal life! I want to live with Jesus forever in heaven! Please, Father, help me daily to warn others to prepare so they too will be ready! In Jesus' name I ask it, Amen.

The Final Death of the Wicked

What the Bible Says about Hell

In a publication of "religious instruction" for children, published a number of years ago, is found the following word picture of hell and its tortures:

"Look into this prison. In the middle of it there is a boy, a young man. He is silent; despair is on him. He stands straight up. His eyes are burning like two burning coals. Two long flames come out of his ears. His breathing is difficult. Sometimes he opens his mouth and a breath of blazing fire rolls out of it.

"But listen! There is a sound just like that of a kettle boiling. Is it really a kettle which is boiling? No; then what is it? Here is what it is:

"The blood is boiling in the scalded veins of that boy. The brain is boiling and bubbling in his head. The marrow is boiling in his bones! Ask him, put the question to him: why is he thus tormented? His answer is that, when he was alive, his blood boiled to do very wicked things, and he did them. And it was for that he went to dancing-houses, public-houses, and theaters.

"Ask him, does he think the punishment greater than he deserves? 'No,' he says, 'my punishment is not greater than I deserve; it is just.' I knew it not so while on earth, but I know now that it is just. There is a just and a terrible God. He is terrible to sinners in hell—but He is just!" —J. Furniss, *"The Sight of Hell,"* in *Tracts for Spiritual Reading*, Sec. 27, p. 20.

At the front of the above booklet, an important churchman wrote that this was good reading for children!

"I have carefully read over this Little Volume for Children and have found nothing whatever in it contrary to the doctrines of Holy Faith; but, on the contrary, a great deal to charm, instruct and edify our youthful classes, for whose benefit it has been written."—*William Meagher, Vicar General, Dublin, Ireland, December 14, 1855.*

It is tragic that such information is given to children to read, when it is just not true! It portrays God as an evil beast that everyone should want to run away from. When, in fact, He is our kind, loving heavenly Father. Yes, **there will be hellfire someday,—but it will only be for an extremely short period of time—and then those who are lost will mercifully no longer exist—forever.** *In this chapter, we are going to prove this to you from God's Inspired book, the Bible.*

There is a time coming when God will do "His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act" (Isaiah 28:21). It will indeed be a strange act for the One who died to save all of mankind. It will be a strange act for One who prayed while they crucified Him, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

It is a tragedy that millions of people have become unbelievers and skeptics, because they accepted the error that God will burn people forever! Many have been driven to insanity by the harrowing thought of unsaved loved ones in the never-ending torments of a burning hell.

Yes, it is indeed tragic! Men and women are simply not able to reconcile this false teaching of eternal torment with the wonderful truth of God's deep love for mankind.

The brilliant attorney Robert Ingersoll is an example of one who would not have become a leading infidel—had it not been for a misunderstanding of the truth about the final punishment of the wicked.

When he was a child, Robert's father told him that there were infants in hell not longer than a span in length, who were destined to burn throughout eternity.

Young Robert thought, "If that is what God does, I want nothing to do with Him!" His logical mind correctly recognized that eternal punishment for the sins of a brief lifetime on earth would not be just.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE THREE WORDS FOR "HELL"

In the Bible, our English word, "hell," has three meanings:

1 - Our English word, "hell," is sometimes translated from the Hebrew word for the "grave." The Hebrew word frequently used for "grave" is sheol. One example would be *Psalms 16:10*, where sheol ("grave") has been translated as "hell." "For Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption."—*Psalms 16:10.*

The above text is quoted by Peter in *Acts 2:27*, where the Greek word for "grave" (*hades*) is used. But, unfortunately, it is incorrectly translated as "hell." Then, in *verse 31*, Peter explains that *Psalms 16:10* was a prophecy about Christ!

"He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."—*Acts 2:31-32*.

Of course, we know that Christ was not burning in hell! In reality, Christ went into the grave at His death after His crucifixion. But He was not left in the grave, but was raised from the dead early on the third day.

The word, *hades*, is used eleven times in the New Testament. In *1 Corinthians 15:55* it is translated "grave." But elsewhere it is translated "hell," signifying the grave or "state in the grave."

2 - Hell correctly signifies a "place of burning." In the New Testament the word is *gehenna*, or the "Valley of Hinnom." This was a deep, narrow glen south of Jerusalem, which was used as a garbage dump, where the bodies of dead animals and city refuse were cast.

What the fire did not destroy, the worms consumed.

It was thus a type of complete annihilation. *Gehenna*, the place of burning, is used twelve times, and is always translated "hell."

3 - In one place, the Greek word for "a place of darkness" is translated as "hell." "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."—*2 Peter 2:4*.

The Greek word here is *tartaroo* (derived from *tartarus*), not *gehenna* or *hades*. The above text pictures it as a place of darkness, which describes the darkness surrounding Satan and his angels when they were separated

from God and heaven. Wherever Satan and his followers are, a dark cloud of evil and misery surrounds them.

WHERE DO ALL MEN GO AT DEATH?

All men go to the grave at death; that is, to hades or sheol. Job said:

"For I know that Thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living."—*Job 30:23*.

This house of death is the grave. "If I wait, the grave is mine house" (*Job 17:13*).

The grave is an impartial one; for everyone goes there at death. "There is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked" (*Ecclesiastes 9:2*).

"What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?"—*Psalms 89:48*.

The rich and the poor, the high and the low, the righteous and the wicked all go to that place, the grave.

"All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again."—*Ecclesiastes 3:20*.

Yes, death is an enemy (*1 Corinthians 15:26*), and the grave is not a comforting thought,—but we can thank God that there is hope beyond the grave!

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."—*Revelation 14:13*.

And we can also rejoice that **the wicked (and everyone else) slumbers in silence in the grave, rather than screaming in torture and agony. There is no pain in the grave.**

WHEN WILL THE RIGHTEOUS DEAD COME OUT OF THEIR GRAVES?

God's faithful ones will come out of their graves at the **Second Coming of Christ**: at the sound of the "last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible" (*1 Corinthians 15:52*).

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

"Wherefore comfort one another with these words."—*1 Thessalonians 4:16-18*.

Christ promised His faithful ones that He would one day return for them.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."—*John 14:1-3*.

This promise will soon be fulfilled! At the sound of the "trump of God," the saints who have slept in silence, unconscious of the passing of time, will suddenly be awakened. Some have slumbered for thousands of years; others only for a brief rest in the grave. But, to all, the time will seem the same—as in a moment, or "the twinkling of an eye." They will come forth with faces glowing with

joy, health, and immortality,—and will go with Christ to heaven.

WHEN WILL THE WICKED DEAD COME OUT OF THEIR GRAVES?

Paul tells us that **there will be "a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust"** (*Acts 24:15*).

Other passages of Scripture confirm this:

"Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."—*Daniel 12:2*.

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."—*John 5:28-29*.

The righteous are raised at the Second Advent of Christ. But the wicked are not raised until one thousand years later.

"The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished."—*Revelation 20:5*.

This thousand years, or "millennium" as it is called, will be discussed in much greater detail later in this book.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE WICKED?

Soon after the wicked are resurrected, they together with the devil, his evil angels, death, and the grave, will be cast into the lake of fire (*Revelation 20: 10-15*). This is the *gehenna*, the actual burning hell.

The Apostle Peter declared:

"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."—*2 Peter 2:9*.

He also said that the earth itself is "reserved unto fire against the day of judgment" (*2 Peter 3:7*), and that "the elements shall melt with fervent heat" (*verse 10*).

John explains that fire will come down from God out of heaven and devour the wicked, along with the devil, death, and the grave, in a "lake of fire." This is called the "second death" (*Revelation 20:9-14*).

WHERE WILL THIS FIRE OCCUR?

It is important that we understand that this fire occurs on the surface of the earth, not somewhere beneath it!

"As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world."—*Matthew 13:40*.

"Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."—*Matthew 3:12*.

"These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."—*Revelation 19:20*.

"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire.

This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."—*Revelation 20:14-15*.

"Fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them."—*Revelation 20:9*.

God has promised that He will bring Satan to ashes upon the earth (*Ezekiel 28:18*)—not underground somewhere.

This fire on the surface of the earth will end in death, not eternal life.

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."—*Revelation 21:8*.

"He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."—*Revelation 2:11*.

This fact, that hell will burn on the surface of the earth, provides yet another proof that there could be no burning hell now. It must be yet future—for it is not now burning anywhere in our world.

Since the wicked perish in this burning gehenna and the earth itself becomes a molten lake of fire, we can more clearly understand the Bible statement, that the wicked will be "recompensed" here on the earth (*Proverbs 11:31*) and that they shall be "brought forth" from the grave to this "day of wrath" (*Job 21:30*).

Jesus Himself said that "the tares are the children of the wicked one," and "as therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of the world" (*Matthew 13:38, 40*).

All of these passages provide ample evidence that the fiery end to the wicked, this fiery hell, is yet future. At the present time, not one person is burning in hell.

Second, this fact also shows that the burning hell

cannot last very long—because the promise has been given to God's faithful ones that they will inherit the earth! But they will never be able to inherit it—if the stifling smoke and fire of hell were to continue here forever.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."—*Matthew 5:5*. (See also *Psalm 37:11, 29; Isaiah 65:17-25*.)

"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."—*Matthew 13:43*.

"But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever. . .

"And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom."—*Daniel 7:18, 27*.

The fire will be on the surface of the earth, although not for very long. Then it will end.

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE THAT THIS FIRE IS YET FUTURE

In a later chapter, we will discuss the future millennium, at the end of which the wicked will be raised from their graves and be burned up. Here are two other passages which show that this hellfire is yet future:

"The harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world."—*Matthew 13:39-40*.

"So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,

and shall cast them into the furnace of fire."—*Matthew 13:49-50*.

HOW MUCH OF MAN WILL BE CAST INTO THIS FIRE?

This is the gehenna, the final end of the unrepentant.

The Bible teaches that the entire bodies of the wicked will be consumed in it.

Jesus warned us nine times about the "burning" hell, the gehenna fire. Here are two of them. They make it clear that **the whole man—soul and body—will be cast into hellfire.**

"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."—*Matthew 10:28*.

"If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hellfire."—*Matthew 18:8-9*.

We have earlier learned that, at death, the entire person goes into the grave,—and there is no fire in the grave! All this adds to the evidence that the burning hell is yet future.

WHO IS THE FIRE FOR?

This fire was not intended for people; but it is intended for the devil and his angels. However, those

who choose Satan as their leader will also be destroyed with him in that fire.

"Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."—*Matthew 25:41*.

Satan is the root; his followers are the branches. All will alike perish.

"For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."—*Malachi 4:1*.

HOW LONG DOES THIS FIRE LAST?

The meaning of everlasting and eternal—This fire of the future is called "everlasting," or eternal. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment" (*Matthew 25:46*). It is a punishment which will end when the fire goes out, but the consequences are everlasting. The wicked receive a punishment which is "everlasting" in its effects.

The question may be asked: If whatever is cast into this fire is completely consumed, why would the fire always be kept burning? The answer is that it will not.

Sodom and Gomorrah are examples of how this kind of fire works. The Bible says they were totally "destroyed" long ago (*Luke 17:29; Genesis 19:29*). But Jude says they were burned up by "eternal fire." "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after

strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."—*Jude 7*.

We know where those two cities were located; and, although they were burned with "eternal fire," **they are not burning today**. They received fire with eternal effects.

Peter explains how the fire affected those two cities:

"And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly."—*2 Peter 2:6*.

So those two cities received "eternal fire" which, after it ended, left only "ashes." Elsewhere, we are told that they were quickly destroyed ("overthrown as in a moment"; *Lamentations 4:6*).

The meaning of unquenchable—This is fire which devours so thoroughly, that it cannot be put out until it has completed its work. For this reason, it is called "unquenchable"; that is, it cannot be quenched or put out until it is finished. But when the wicked—including Satan—are totally destroyed, then the fire will go out.

"He will . . . gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."—*Matthew 3:12*.

Here is a Bible example which shows that "unquenchable fire" does not last forever:

Because of continued Sabbath desecration by the Jews, **God threatened the destruction of Jerusalem by a fire that "shall not be quenched"** (*Jeremiah 17:27*).

That fire later occurred (*2 Chronicles 36:19, Jeremiah 52:12-13*).

Jerusalem is not still burning today. "Unquenchable" fire is fire that cannot be put out until it has consumed everything. **Unquenchable fire burns everything up and then burns out.** In the same way, the wicked will be destroyed.

"Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."—*Mark 9:44*.

A city-wide conflagration once enveloped Chicago. It was an unstoppable fire which could not be quenched. But that does not mean that Chicago is still burning.

The meaning of "their worm that dieth not"—The "worm that dieth not" is a figure taken from the refuse dump in the Valley of Hinnom, on the south side of ancient Jerusalem. The fact that garbage was constantly thrown into this dump, which kept the fires always burning there, was the surest proof that whatever was cast into it would be entirely consumed. —But when nothing more was thrown in, the fire eventually ended, after having done a thorough job of destruction.

Speaking of the enemies of the Lord, Isaiah said, "The worm shall eat them like wool" (*Isaiah 51:8*). This is a picture of being put out of existence.

What the fire did not destroy the worms devoured.

It is a symbol of complete and final destruction—total annihilation of sinners.

The Bible also speaks of "eternal redemption" (*Hebrews 9:12*) and "eternal judgment" (*Hebrews 6:2*). But this does not mean redemption going on through all eternity or an unending work of judgment. No; both are eventually finished, but with results which will last forever.

The meaning of forever and ever—Why is this fire said to be "forever and ever"? (*Revelation 14:11* and *20:10*). In order to understand it, we must see how this phrase is used elsewhere in the Bible. When we do, we discover that **the Bible usage means "as long as it lasts," which should frequently be translated, "as long as he lives."**

For instance, in *1 Samuel 1:22* we find that **Hannah lent Samuel to the Lord "forever."** It means, "as long as he lives." *Verse 28* translates it in that manner: "As long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord." (Similar passages are *1 Samuel 27:12*; *Job 41:4*.) In *Exodus 21:5-6*, a man can volunteer to be a slave "forever"; but, if it really meant forever, there would be slavery in heaven!

Christ is called "a priest forever" (*Hebrews 5:6*); yet, after sin is blotted out and the Second Advent occurs, Christ's work as a priest will end.

Jonah was said to be in the belly of the great fish forever (*Jonah 2:6*), yet it only lasted three days and three nights (*Jonah 1:17*). Leprosy was said to cleave to Gehazi and his offspring forever (*2 Kings 5:27*), and Philemon was counseled to receive Onesimus forever (*Philemon 15*). The Passover was to be kept "forever" (*Exodus 12:24*), but it ended at the cross (see *Colossians 2:14-17*). Aaron and his sons were to offer incense "forever" (*1 Chronicles 23:13*), and have an "everlasting priesthood" (*Exodus 40:15*); yet this priesthood, with its offerings of incense, ended at Calvary (*Hebrews 7, 9*).

Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon, the most exhaustive research work of its kind, gives the following definition

of the Greek word, translated "forever," in the KJV:

"A space or period of time, especially a lifetime, life . . . Also one's time of life, age: the age of man . . . 2. A long space of time, eternity . . . 3. Later, a space of time clearly defined and marked out, an era, age, . . . this present life, this world."

As long as the wicked live, as long as consciousness lasts, they will be in the flames. For some, this will only be a few moments. For Satan, it will be longest of all. Yet we are told that even he will eventually cease to exist. "Never shalt thou be anymore" (Ezekiel 28:19) will be what God says of Satan, who is destroyed in that fire.

And the verse before it says:

"And I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth."—*Ezekiel 28:18*.

It is clear that these words, "forever" and "forever and ever," must be compared with other passages of Scripture in order to properly understand them. In this chapter, we have found abundant evidence that the wicked do not burn without end. "They shall be destroyed forever" (*Psalm 92:7*) means that the results of that destruction will last forever. The wicked "shall not see life" (*John 3:36*). "No murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (*1 John 3:15*).

This fire will be so thorough in destroying the wicked that, when it is done, not a hot coal or any fire will remain:

"Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it."—*Isaiah 47:14*.

While it is taught in many pulpits that all the wicked will burn forever, the Bible, in stark contrast, clearly teaches that **some will suffer only a short time, while other more wicked people will suffer a little longer.**

"And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes."—*Luke 12:47-48*.

God does not delight in punishment. ***It is His strange act.***

"He shall be wroth . . . that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act."—*Isaiah 28:21*.

But sin must be eradicated. In fairness to the universe, there is no other way to deal with it. The rebellion has to be brought to an end. This planet, if one sinner were left on it, would be a deadly virus forever threatening the universe.

A QUICK, TOTAL DESTRUCTION

The Bible is quite clear about this. **The *gehenna* hell will burn until "both soul and body" are destroyed.**

"Fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body" (*Matthew 10:28*).

This hell will burn until the wicked are devoured (*Revelation 20:9*). That will be the "second death." **It will be a total everlasting death—oblivion,—not an everlasting burning life (verse 14).**

"The Lord preserveth all them that love Him: but all

the wicked will He destroy."—*Psalm 145:20*.

Some of the strongest words are used by the Scripture writers, in the original Hebrew and Greek in which the Bible was written, to emphasize the total destruction of the wicked. They will not only "burn" (*katio*; *Revelation 19:20; 21:8*), but they shall be "burned up" (*katakaio*; *2 Peter 3:10; Matthew 3:12*). They shall not only be "destroyed" (*apollumi*; *Matthew 21:41; Mark 1:24*), but be "utterly destroyed" (*exolothreuo*; *Acts 3:23, R.V.*). They shall not only be "consumed" (*tamam*; *Psalm 104:35*), and "consume away," (*kalah*; *Psalm 37:20*), but be "utterly consumed" (*apollumi* in the *Septuagint*; *Psalm 73:19*).

It is obvious that the wicked will be completely blotted out of existence by this fire. That is why it is called "the second death." At the first death, the wicked go into the grave, as does everyone else. But only the wicked experience this second death, which marks the end of the sinner, the end of death, and the end of the grave.

The fact that the wicked "will be cut off" is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament. The word, "cut off," is *karath* and means "totally destroy" (as it is used in *Ezekiel 28:16*). "All the wicked will He destroy" (*Psalm 145:20*).

"Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off."—*Psalm 37:37-38*.

Notice in the two following statements that, as soon as the wicked are destroyed, the redeemed will inherit the earth:

"For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace."—*Psalm 37:9-11*.

"Wait on the Lord, and keep His way, and He shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it."—*Psalm 37:34*.

THE WICKED ARE LIKENED TO VERY PERISHABLE MATERIALS

During that brief period of time in which they finally perish forever, **the wicked are compared to fragile substances which are burned up quickly.**

Nothing burns as quickly as hay and stubble! After a fire goes out, only the "ashes" remain; and soon they are gone also. The following passage compares those burned as being like "stubble," and the rather quick result to "ashes." "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

"But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

"And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do

this, saith the Lord of hosts.”—*Malachi 4:1-3*.

The wicked are said to be like “the chaff which the wind driveth away” (*Psalms 1:4*). Isaiah says that “the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble” (*Isaiah 40:24*).

The wicked are to be utterly destroyed—consumed away as quickly as animal “fat,” changed into “smoke,” and brought to “ashes.” “But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.”—*Psalms 37:20*.

GOD'S MERCIFUL PLAN

Sin and sinners will be forever gone from the universe. The righteous could not be happy throughout eternity if they knew that loved ones were forever suffering in flames! No, no. God has something wonderful planned for all. The righteous will live in continual happiness forever. **The wicked, who could not be happy in the peace of heaven, will no longer exist. It will be merciful of God to put them out of their selfish misery.**

The destruction of the wicked will be quick and complete, leaving only stubble burned into ashes (*Malachi 4:1-3*). And it will be final.

“They shall be as though they had not been.”—*Obadiah 16*.

It will not take long for the wicked to be consumed.

“As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more.”—*Proverbs 10:25*.

“For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea,

thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

“But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.”—*Psalms 37:10-11*.

Through sin they have forfeited the right to life and an immortal existence. Instead, they have chosen the way of death and destruction. Because of the way in which they used their probationary time while living in this world, they squandered their final opportunities to return to God.

Their destruction will, in fact, be an act of love and mercy on the part of God; for to perpetuate their lives would only be to perpetuate sin, sorrow, suffering, and misery.

We are told that God takes “no pleasure in the death of the wicked” (*Ezekiel 33:11*). He would have saved every one of them if He could. But they would not come to Him that they might be saved.

“Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.”—*Ezekiel 18:31-32*.

The power and authority of the divine government shall be employed to put down rebellion; yet **all the manifestations of retributive justice will be perfectly consistent with the character of God as a merciful,**

longsuffering, benevolent being.

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."—*Romans 6:23*.

"See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that thou mayest live."—*Deuteronomy 30:15-16*.

However, there must come a time when the wicked perish, and He has reserved them unto the day of judgment. In view of that fact, why should anyone wish to rush them off to hell as soon as they die?

The wicked will burn in fire on the surface of the earth, yet God's promise is that the righteous will inherit the earth and make it their home forever.

Here are three Bible passages which tell us that **the wicked will be blotted out before the redeemed inherit the earth**:

"Wait on the Lord, and keep His way, and **He shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off.**"—*Psalms 37:34*.

"For evildoers shall be cut off: but **those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.** For yet a little while, and **the wicked shall not be**: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But **the meek shall inherit the earth**; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace."—*Psalms 37:9-11*.

"For, behold, **the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven**; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: **and the day that cometh shall burn them up**, saith the Lord of hosts, **that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.**

"But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; **and ye shall go forth**, and grow up as calves of the stall. And **ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes** under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts."—*Malachi 4:1-3*.

Then, when the fire ends, the experience of sin will be forever over; and God's original plan of peopling the earth with a race of holy, happy beings will be carried out.

"Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless."—*2 Peter 3:13-14*.

"God Himself was crucified with Christ; for Christ was one with the Father. **Few give thought to the suffering that sin has caused our Creator.** All heaven suffered in Christ's agony; but that suffering did not begin or end with His manifestation in humanity. The cross is a revelation to our dull senses of the pain that, from its very inception, sin has brought to the heart of God. **Every departure from the right, every deed of cruelty, every failure of**

humanity to reach His ideal, brings grief to Him. When there came upon Israel the calamities that were the sure result of separation from God—subjugation by their enemies, cruelty, and death—it is said that ‘His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.’ ‘In all their affliction He was afflicted: . . . and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old’ (*Judges 10:16; Isaiah 63:9*).—*Amazing Grace*, 189.

“His Spirit ‘maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.’ As **the ‘whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain’** (*Romans 8:26, 22*), **the heart of the infinite Father is pained in sympathy.**

Our world is a vast lazar house, a scene of misery that we dare not allow our thoughts to dwell upon. Did we realize it as it is, the burden would be too terrible. **Yet God feels it all.**”—*Education*, 263-264.

“Not a sigh is breathed, not a pain felt, not a grief pierces the soul, but the throb vibrates to the Father’s heart.”—*Desire of Ages*, 356.

“He who knows the depths of the world’s misery and despair, knows by what means to bring relief. . .

Although human beings have abused their mercies, wasted their talents, and lost the dignity of godlike manhood, the Creator is to be glorified in their redemption.”—*Education*, 270.

SUMMARY

One of the most beloved verses in the Bible—John 3:16—clearly states that God’s faithful ones will

not perish, but will “live forever.” The entire passage also explains that the wicked will be condemned because they refused to accept Christ as their Saviour.

“Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

“For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.

“He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”—*John 3:15-18*.

The righteous will be “recompensed [rewarded] at the resurrection of the just” (*Luke 14:14*). Oh, what a glorious day that will be!

“As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness.”—*Psalms 17:15*.

The bodies of the redeemed will come forth from the grave without any traces of age, sickness, or flaws (*1 Corinthians 15:42-44; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Corinthians 15:54-55; Luke 20:36*).

But a thousand years later, the wicked will be raised—and then forever perish. They will experience a death and total destruction which lasts forever.

“What shall the end be of them that obey not the

gospel of God?"—1 Peter 4:17.

"For the wages of sin is death."—Romans 6:23.

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die."—Ezekiel 18:4.

"Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction."—2 Thessalonians 1:9.

"But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away."—Psalm 37:20.

"And fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them."—Revelation 20:9.

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."—Revelation 21:8.

"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."—1 Corinthians 15:26.

"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."—Matthew 13:43.

"Wherefore," the Apostle Paul tells us to "comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:18).

MY COMMITMENT

Father in heaven, help me to do what I can to lead others around me to Christ; so they will be able to inherit eternal life. This life is so short, and so many important decisions need to be made; so that people will not be lost. In Jesus's name I ask it. Amen.

Questions and Answers about Death

Additional Important Bible Facts

Clarence Darrow, the famous criminal lawyer, once held a debate with a rabbi, a priest, and a minister on the subject of immortality. All three clergymen used symbols, similes, and allegories to defend their position that the soul of man is indestructible and not subject to the power of death.

When Darrow arose, he said, "These gentlemen never once used the Bible to prove their assertions, much less did they quote from its pages."

However, there are some difficult passages in the Bible which are "hard to be understood" (2 Peter 3:15-16). When there is apparent contradiction or seeming difference of meaning, two things should be kept in mind:

First, difficult texts should be studied in the light of the general teaching of the Bible on that particular subject. **Second, all lines of Bible doctrine should run parallel.** For instance, the Bible teaches that the judgment occurs down at the end of time. So we would be out of harmony with Scripture if we believed God took good people to heaven at death and put bad people into flames at death; when, as yet, they have not been judged in the final judgment. (See Hebrews 9:27.)

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

So here are six answers to difficult passages concerning death:

1 - The thief on the cross—Jesus told the repentant thief, “Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise” (*Luke 23:43*). Did Jesus take the thief to heaven that day?

First, Jesus, Himself, did not go to paradise that day. Paradise is where the tree of life is (*Revelation 2:7*).

That is in heaven at the throne of God (*Revelation 22:1-2*). Jesus did not ascend to heaven until the day of His resurrection. To Mary, He said at that time, “Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father” (*John 20:17*).

Second, there is no punctuation in the original. When Luke wrote those words, punctuation marks had not yet been invented.

So, in order to make the verse agree with the above Bible facts, **the comma should be moved from before “today” to after “today”:** “Verily I say unto thee today, thou shalt be with Me in paradise.” It was on that day—the day of His worst humiliation—that Christ could give the glorious promise, that the thief would be saved and later be with Him in heaven! What a promise is that for the rest of us!

Notice that **the thief did not ask to be taken to**

paradise then. He said, “Lord remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom” (*Luke 23:42*). That is exactly when he will be remembered and taken into that kingdom.

2 - Shall never die—What did Christ mean when He told Mary that those who believed in Him would never die? The entire passage explains it:

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.”—*John 11:25-26*.

Both the righteous and wicked will be resurrected, but only those believing in Christ will live forever. The rest will die the second death (*Revelation 20:13-15*).

God is looking to the future when He says that the wicked are dead even while they live (*1 Timothy 5:6*). They go down into Christless graves, rise in the resurrection to receive judgment, and go down in the “second death” (*Revelation 21:8*). And God is looking to the future when He says that the righteous have eternal life.

This also explains why Christ said to the unbelieving Jews, “Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life” (*John 5:40*).

But the Christian who has accepted Christ has life in his heart. He has everlasting life abiding in him—as long as he remains faithful to Christ. This also explains why Paul said that Christ “abolished

death" (2 Timothy 1:10); whereas, he elsewhere said that God's faithful ones do not conquer death until the resurrection, when "death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15:54). Thank God that the time is coming when "death and hell" are "cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:14).

Then, and not till then, will death truly be abolished.

3 - The spirits in prison—Some believe that, during the time between His crucifixion and His resurrection, Christ went and preached to the spirits in prison.

Here is the unusual passage:

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."—1 Peter 3:18-20.

First, notice that **Christ preached to them by "the Spirit,"** and that word is capitalized. So whatever preaching was done was accomplished through the Holy Spirit.

Second, **this preaching was done while Noah was building the Ark,** not long before the Flood covered the earth (Genesis 6).

"And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man."—Genesis 6:3.

In other words, God's Spirit pleaded with men through the preaching of Noah.

Third, the preaching was done to "spirits in prison." The words, "spirit" and "soul," are often used when talking about people. David prayed, "Bring my soul out of prison" (Psalm 142:7). Paul spoke of being in captivity to the law of sin (Romans 7:23).

It was the work of Christ "to bring out the prisoners from the prison" (Isaiah 42:7).

In summary, Christ preached by the Holy Spirit, while Noah was building the Ark. And He did it to the "spirits in prison;" that is, to those individuals whose sinful lives were bound in the prison house of sin.

4 - Under punishment until the judgment—In the Revised Standard Version of 2 Peter 2:9, we read:

"The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trial, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment."—2 Peter 2:9, RSV.

This suggests that, after death, the wicked suffer punishment prior to the day of judgment.

First, this concept contradicts the whole teaching of Scripture. (Throughout this book, we use the KJV.)

Second, "to punish" may be translated to show immediate activity, or eventual purpose.

The RSV translates it to show immediate activity:

“ . . to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment.”—*2 Peter 2:9, RSV*.

The King James Version translates it to show eventual purpose:

“ . . and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.”—*2 Peter 2:9, KJV*.

There is a great difference between the two translations! The KJV agrees with the rest of Scripture, but the RSV does not.

Elsewhere in this same epistle, the RSV correctly translates the words: “kept until the judgment” (*2 Peter 2:4, RSV*), indicating that the fallen angels are not, at present, suffering punishment; this is because the time of the judgment for the wicked is later, in the future.

5 - The rich man and Lazarus—In the parable of *Luke 16:19-31*, the rich man died and went to hell. “Being in torments,” he called to the beggar Lazarus, who had also died and was in Abraham’s bosom.

What is the meaning of this?

First, God sometimes speaks of the future as if it is present.

“God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.”—*Romans 4:17*.

However, **the story of the rich man and Lazarus is a parable, and cannot be regarded as literal. It comes in the midst of a long series of parables.**

Parables often teach some main lesson, but should not be held to every detail. (See *Judges 9:6-20*, for example.)

As He prepared to give this parable, Jesus was rebuking the covetous Pharisees (*Luke 16:14*) by showing that the rich may fare well here, but not hereafter. **He used one of their own traditions to drive this point home.**

First, let us consider Lazarus, and then the rich man.

Lazarus is represented as being carried by the angels to “Abraham’s bosom.” However, it is at the Second Coming of Christ, not at death, that the angels gather the elect (*Matthew 24:31*).

In addition, **Abraham would find it difficult to hold all the redeemed next to his chest.** So this cannot possibly be literal.

There was another Lazarus, a literal one, who died (*John 11:14-44*). He was the brother of Mary and Martha.

After four days dead in the grave, when Jesus called him to life, He said, “Lazarus, come forth.” He did not say, “Come from Abraham’s bosom.” After being restored to life, this literal Lazarus had nothing to say about Abraham’s bosom, or anything else that had happened during those four days; for “the dead know not anything” (*Ecclesiastes 9:5*). When a real person dies, “his thoughts perish” (*Psalms 146:4*). So

the Lazarus of the parable cannot be taken literally.

Then there is the rich man in the parable. In the symbolism of this story, he was in hell with a body. He had eyes, tongue, etc. (*Luke 16:23-24*). **How did his body get into hellfire instead of into the grave?**

Of this rich man we read: "And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame" (*Luke 16:23-24*). **The word "hell" used here is hades, which means "the grave." But there is no fire in the grave**, so we here have still further evidence that this parable cannot be taken literally.

The request of Lazarus, to dip the tip of his finger in water and come through the flames to cool the rich man's tongue, is obviously not literal. **How much moisture would remain on the finger and how much relief would it give?**

The heart of the entire parable is found in verse 31:

"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."—*Luke 16:31*.

Astoundingly, not long afterward—a literal Lazarus was raised from the dead (*John 11:43*)—and the Jews that Jesus was speaking to would not

believe that either!

The real lesson of the parable is that prosperity in this life does not guarantee prosperity hereafter,—but that it is now that we must prepare for eternity!

"For the grave cannot praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth."—*Isaiah 38:18*.

There is no second chance!

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."—*2 Corinthians 6:2*.

Now is the time to speak words of kindness, and do deeds of love. Now is the time to accept Christ as our Saviour and faithfully obey all that He tells us in Scripture.

Someone has said, "The more of earth we want, the less of heaven we'll get."

Early in World War II, Colonel Warren J. Clear was ordered, by his superior officer, to leave Corregidor just before it fell. He was to board a submarine at midnight. In his orders were these words, "Be ready to go aboard. No personal baggage." When we say good-bye to this world and breathe our last breath, we will take only our character with us. If we die holding tightly to Christ, we will be raised in the resurrection to live with Him forever.

6 - Departing and being with Christ—Here is the Bible passage:

"For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire

to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.” — *Philippians 1:23*.

Paul did not say, in this text, that he would go to be with Christ when he died. He undoubtedly was using the word, “depart,” in reference to his death. But the Bible clearly reveals that **Paul did not believe his “departure” would mean immediate entrance into heaven.** Here is the proof:

“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of My departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished My course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which **the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.**” — *2 Timothy 4:6-8*.

Since he obviously did not expect to get his eternal crown at his departure in death, **when did Paul anticipate actually being with Christ?** Here is the answer:

“For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” — *1 Thessalonians 4:16-18*.

Oh, my friend, you have just learned the Bible

truth about death and the grave, and also the Bible truth about hellfire. We have learned that God is kind and merciful. It is Satan who causes misery and destruction. But God has warned us that a time is coming when those who choose to remain in sin, and refuse to come in repentance to Christ and let Him forgive them and enable them, by His grace, to obey His moral law of Ten Commandments—will perish. They will die and no longer exist.

We encourage you to contact us and ask for a copy of our book, *Discovered: An Important Bible Truth That Many Have Forgotten*. It will tell you about another, equally important, truth in the Bible which so many today do not understand.

How important it is that we love and trust Christ, and each day plead with Him for forgiveness, guidance, and help in obeying the truths in the Bible. We are so close to the end of time, and events all around us point to the fact with startling clearness!

If purity of heart and life is what you want, then come to Jesus just now. He alone can forgive your sins, no man or earthly priest can. **Christ alone can impart to you strengthening grace so you can clean up your life—and become His humble, believing, obedient child!** He alone can bring genuine happiness into your life.

We have only to live one day at a time, and if we cling to Jesus, He will give us strength for today, and

when tomorrow comes, He will help us then also—if we will remain close by His side! Every day will find its own victories, just as it finds its trials.

Christ died on Calvary to impart enabling grace, so you and I can obey God's holy law—and live clean, godly lives! Yes, you will be buffeted by temptation; for Satan will be determined to once again capture and chain you. The devil knows that he is going to be destroyed for breaking God's law, and he wants as many as possible to die with him.

You will have trials and problems. We all encounter them in this life. **But having entered the new life of submission and obedience to Christ as His humble, believing, obedient child,—you will have the comfort and guidance of holy angels, as you daily plead for help.**

“The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing.”

—*Ecclesiastes 9:5*

FOR MORE INFORMATION,

AND OR ANYTHING ELSE,

PLEASE CONTACT:

MOBILE: 0404 881 885.

INTERNATIONAL: 61 404 881 885.

WEB SITE: www.freeliteraturemultimedia.org

EMAIL: freeliteraturemultimedia@gmail.com

POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 220, MUNDARING,

WESTERN AUSTRALIA, 6073.

Many Wonder —

What will happen to me after I die?

Where are my loved ones now?

Are they tormented or at peace?

I do want to know.

The Bible gives clear answers.

