

DEATH

# The Dead In Christ

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## What Scripture Teaches about the Dead in Christ.

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1. Those who anticipatively believed in our Lord Jesus Christ before He came into this world, at death, became disembodied souls and were gathered to their people (disembodied souls like themselves) into a definite place called in Hebrew, Sheol, and in Greek, Hades.

"Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people.

And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre." (Genesis 25:8, 9.)

The statement is clear and simple:

1. Abraham gave up the ghost.

That is, he expired, literally, **breathed out** and died.

2. He was **gathered** to his people.

3. He was **buried**.

"Gathered to his people," and "buried" are not the same thing.

Abraham's people were buried in Chaldea.

Abraham's body was buried in Palestine.

Between Palestine and Chaldea there are hundreds of miles.

Since Abraham was buried in Palestine and not in Chaldea, he was not **buried** with his people.

To be "gathered to his people" therefore, does **not** mean that Abraham was **buried**.

If to be "gathered to his people" does not mean he was buried, and he was "gathered to his people" **before** he was buried, then he was gathered to his people apart from, and independently of, his body.

To die and be gathered to his people apart from his body, it was necessary that he himself should be out of his body.

Out of his body he became a disembodied soul.

As a disembodied soul therefore he was gathered to his people and these, necessarily, disembodied souls like himself.

"Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was **gathered unto his people**, being old and full of days: **and** his sons Esau and Jacob **buried** him." (Genesis 35:29.)

That "gathered to his people" is distinct from burial is dramatically demonstrated in the death of Jacob; as it is written:

"And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was **gathered** unto his people." (Genesis 49:33).

1. He yielded up the ghost.

2. He was gathered unto his people.

Nothing is said in this verse about burial.

There is much said about it in the next chapter.

There we learn Jacob's body was embalmed; that it took forty days to embalm it.

For **seventy** days after that the body was kept in state, the Egyptians making an official mourning for Jacob and doing it that they might honor Joseph as the vice ruler of the kingdom, honoring the Son in honoring the Father.

At the end of this public mourning Joseph took his Father's body up to Palestine and buried it in the cave of Machpelah along with the bodies of Abraham and Isaac.

Thus, altogether, one hundred and ten days elapsed between the time when Jacob was gathered unto his people, and when his body was buried; but, if you include the forty days of embalming in the public mourning then ten weeks was the actual elapsed time between the gathering unto his people and the burial of his body.

The gathering of Jacob unto his people and the burial of his body are two events, not only as far apart as the difference in time, but as far apart in kind as the east is from the west, and as distinct from each other as the soul is from the body.

As Jacob was gathered unto his people after he died and before his body was buried, then he was gathered unto his people as a **disembodied soul**.

Concerning this gathering, or assembling of the soul after death, we have a direct headquarters statement which corroborates the meaning already given to it, demonstrates and settles it.

This statement is given by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

It is given in respect to Abraham.

It is set forth in the story which He tells of the Rich man and the beggar Lazarus as recorded in the sixteenth chapter of the Gospel according to Luke.

The beggar died and was carried (we are told) by the angels into Abraham's Bosom.

The Rich man died and was buried (that is, his body was buried).

He awoke from the shock of death and found himself in hell (in **sheol** or **hades**).

Since his body was buried he was now himself in **sheol** or **hades** in a disembodied state. He was there a disembodied soul.

He found himself in a "place of torment."

He looked up and saw Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom.

All three were in **hades**, but their places were distinct.

Abraham and Lazarus were in a place of rest, (and it is said) comfort.

The Rich man was separated from them by a great gulf fixed.

As Abraham's body had been buried in the cave of Machpelah and he is here seen in **hades**, then he is there as a disembodied soul; and thus you have the overwhelming demonstration that when it is said, "Abraham was gathered unto his people," it means Abraham himself survived the death of his

body and as a disembodied soul was gathered, "assembled," into **hades** with other disembodied souls.

From this spectacular demonstration and authoritative declaration of our Lord Jesus Christ there can be no appeal.

## 2. **Sheol or Hades is a location in the heart of the earth.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ tells us the location of His soul between His death and His resurrection.

This is what He says:

"For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights **in the heart of the earth.**" (Matthew 12:40.)

**When** was He three days and three nights in the heart of the earth?

It was not while He was alive in His body.

If not while He was alive in His body, then it must have been after His death and while He was out of the body, and therefore as a disembodied soul.

Since He said He would be in the heart of the earth (and he was not there while in the body) then as a **disembodied soul** He was in the heart of the earth.

He foretold He would be a disembodied soul in the heart of the earth.

He foretold it before He came into this world.

Turn to the Sixteenth Psalm and there you will find Him speaking through the mouth of David of that period when He should be a disembodied soul.

He says:

"Thou (the Father) wilt not leave my **soul** in hell." (Psalm 16:10.)

"Hell" here is the Hebrew, **Sheol** and is equivalent to the Greek, Hades.

Thus our Lord Jesus Christ Himself in His pre-incarnate state declares that between His death and His resurrection His soul would be in hades.

The Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost confirms our Lord's foreview and fore-statement concerning Himself.

Referring to the Sixteenth psalm as the inspired word through the mouth of David, he says:

"He (David) seeing this before (Our Lord's anticipative statement about His soul in hell) spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell." (Acts 2:21.)

In the mouth of two witnesses then (Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostle Peter) we have the sustained statement that during the three days and three nights between His death and His resurrection our Lord's soul was in **sheol** or **hades**.

But now, and mark it well, Our Lord said, during the three days and nights in which He should be a disembodied soul He would be in the heart of the earth.

It is impossible He meant He should be in both places, hades and the heart of the earth, as **distinct localities—and—at the same time**.

Since He could not be a disembodied soul in two distinct places at the same time and He declares

He would be a disembodied soul at the same time in hades and the heart of the earth, **then hades and the heart of the earth are not distinct places but one and the same**.

It is therefore an incontrovertible demonstration that hades was in the heart of the earth.

The worse than fanciful idea that the "heart of the earth" signifies the tomb; and that when our Lord said He would be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth He meant His body would be in the tomb that length of time, is too trifling, as well arrantly unscriptural, to discuss.

The fact is, His body was not under the surface of the earth at all, but on top of it, in a garden, **not even buried** in the earth, but placed in a rock hewn tomb in the garden.

To those who accept the statement of Scripture without an attempt to expound it in the light of human sentiment or without an apology to the demands of so-called reason and science, the fact remains that when our Lord died, as a disembodied soul, He descended into the heart of the earth, into that hades where Abraham and the rest of the souls of the righteous had been "gathered" previously.

That hades is in the heart of the earth is the overwhelming declaration of Holy Scripture.

I will cite a few statements.

In the book of Numbers we have an account of the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.

At the moment when the Lord pronounces judgment against them by the mouth of Moses, Moses says:

“But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD.

They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them.” (Numbers 16:30, 33.)

The thing to be remarked in this Scripture is, primarily, that the word, “pit” is none other than **sheol** or **hades**, and further, that it is said the punished people went **down**, that is, under and into the **depths beneath**.

“A fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the **lowest hell**, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.” (Deuteronomy 32:22.)

The word, “hell” in this passage is **sheol, hades**.

What an absurdity it would be to say, “hell” here means the “grave,” or that other self contradicting proposition that it means (in face of the “fire kindled”) the “unseen” world.

Concerning the interpretation of **sheol** or **hades** as the “grave” it ought to be sufficient to read such utterances as these:

“The pains of hell.” (Psalm 116:3.)

“The sorrows of hell.” (Psalm 18:5.)

Are there “pains” and “sorrows” think you in the grave, the burial place of the body?

Listen to what Jacob says:

“I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning.” (Genesis 37:35.)

The word rendered “grave” is “**sheol**.”

Did Jacob mean he would go down into the burial place of his son’s body? Impossible.

Impossible, because Jacob believed a wild beast had devoured the body of Joseph. He believed his son’s body was in the belly of the wild beast. Jacob meant he would go down into the underworld where, among other disembodied souls gathered there, he would find his son.

The “lowest hell” spoken of in connection with the foundations of the mountains shows that it is in the depths of the earth far below any such thing as a grave dug by the hand of man.

Apart from the fact the word “lowest” in the connection with mountains proves it is not the grave and that it is in the depths of the earth it is significant in the fact that it is a superlative.

A superlative calls for a comparative and positive.

If there be a “lowest” hell there must be two other degrees or places in respect to hell.

Our Lord has described these two.

One He calls “Abraham’s Bosom,” or, “Paradise.”

(This latter is the actual, direct title He gives to it when assuring the thief on the cross that he should be with Him that day in **hades**.)

The other place was **lower** down and is called by the Rich man, "this place of torment."

Hades is described as in the depths by Job.

Speaking of the impossibility of finding out God by searching, he says:

"It is as **high** as heaven . . . **deeper** than hell." (Job 11:8.)

"Hell" is **sheol**.

As Heaven is above the earth, hell is compared as below, in depths, as much out of sight as the heights of Heaven.

"In a moment they go down to the grave." (Job 21:13.)

The word, "grave" is **sheol**.

It is said those who go into it—"go down."

"He keepeth back his soul from the pit." (Job 33:18.)

"Pit" is "**sheol**," and it is said the **soul** could go into it.

"Deliver him from going **down** to the pit." (Job 33:23.)

Literally, "going down to **sheol**."

"He will deliver his soul from going into the pit" (**sheol**). (Job 33:28.)

"To bring back his soul from the pit" (**sheol**). (Job 33:30.)

"What profit is there in my blood when I go **down** to the pit?" (**sheol**). (Psalm 30:9.)

"Let them go **down** quick into hell." (**sheol**). (Psalm 53:15.)

"Thou hast delivered my **soul** from the **lowest** hell" (**sheol**). (Psalm 86:13.)

"Hell (**sheol**) from **beneath** is moved to meet thee (Antichrist) at thy coming." (Isaiah 14:9.)

Here is a statement clear enough and indisputable:

"Hell," (**sheol, hades**) from **beneath**; that is beneath the **surface** of the earth.

"They shall bring thy **soul** to the pit" (**sheol**). (Ezekiel 28:8.)

"I cast him **down** to hell" (**sheol**). (Ezekiel 31:16.)

"They also went down into hell (**sheol**) with him." (Ezekiel 31:17.)

"Though they **dig** into hell" (**sheol**). (Amos 9:12.)

"Dig" has nothing to do with the **air** or the **unseen**, and certainly has no relation to "Heaven."

When Amos speaks of digging into hell he means digging **into** the earth; and as digging can never be applied to that which is "**up**", then the prophet means digging into the earth, **down** into **sheol** or **hades**.

All this and much more that could be given proves **sheol** or **hades** was the abode of disembodied souls and is, as our Lord Himself tells us, "in the **heart of the earth**."

3. When our Lord arose from the dead He took up to Heaven the souls of those who, though they had dwelt in that part of **hades**

called Abraham's Bosom and Paradise, were, nevertheless, captives of death.

As it is written:

"Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive." (Ephesians 4:8.)

This passage may be rendered as follows:

"When he ascended upon high, he led up a multitude of captives."

From whence did He lead them?

The answer is found in the next and parenthetic verse.

(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into **the lower parts of the earth.**

He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens that he might fill all things.) (V.5:9, 10.)

The descent into the "lower parts of the earth" signifies His descent into **hades.**

It cannot, **intelligently**, signify anything else.

From **hades** therefore He took up those who had been the captives of death, such as Abraham and others like him who had faith in God and anticipative faith in Him who is God manifest in the flesh.

#### 4. The Christian Dead.

The Christian who dies is said to be "dead in Christ." (1 Thessalonians 4:16.)

To be dead in Christ is to have died in Christ.

To die in Christ is to die in union with Christ.

To be in union with Christ is to be in union with His Spirit; as it is written:

"He that is joined to the Lord is—**one spirit.**" (1 Corinthians 6:17.)

To be in union with Christ is to be in union with His risen and glorified body; as it is written:

"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." (Ephesians 5:30.)

Our Lord Jesus Christ is declared to be, "Eternal Life"; as it is written:

"That eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." (1 John 1:2.)

To die in Christ then is to die in union with Christ as eternal life, and therefore to die—**in eternal life.**

In the nature of the case as we die in union with Christ as eternal life, death does not, and cannot, touch us.

It can and does touch our body, it cannot touch our personal, soul existence.

**5. At death the believer, as a personal soul, goes out of the body.**

As it is written:

"Absent from the body."

Literally:

"Absent from our home, out of the body."

Here, indeed, is the secret of the death of the body.

The body dies because the person, the soul, goes out of it; as it is written: "The body without the spirit is dead." (James 2:26).

Spirit and soul in the Christian are bound together; so that the going of the spirit is the going of the soul.

In this life the body is the agent of the soul; after death **the spirit** is the agent of the soul. It is for that reason the dead are so often spoken of as **spirits**.

It is the going of the spirit and soul out of the body that leaves it without life.

That death is produced by something more than breath going out of the body should be self evident.

You can manufacture the actual breath of the body.

You can pump it back again into the body.

You can fill the lungs with it, and the nostrils with it; but though you pump it in and fill the body never so full you cannot make the eyes open, the smile come to the lips and the familiar voice be heard. You cannot put back life; **therefore life is something more than breath**.

That something more than breath is the spirit and the soul; and therefore it is to be repeated and affirmed that it is the going of the spirit and soul out of the body that causes its death, its utter lifelessness.

The things to which the body is compared demonstrate this; they demonstrate not only that the spirit and soul are the life of the body, but that the individual, the person, is distinct from the body.

The body is compared to.

**"An earthly house."**

**"A tent."**

**"A tabernacle."**

Just as a person is distinct from a house, a tent, a tabernacle, so is he, by this applied nomenclature, distinct from his body.

The body is said to be the **clothing** of the soul; as it is written:

For in this (body) we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:

If so be that being clothed we shall not be found **naked**. (2 Corinthians 5:2, 3.)

The Apostle does not want to die; for, should he die then he would be unclothed; as he says:

"Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon." (V:4.)

He wants to be clothed with a deathless, immortal body.

The body is called,

**"An earthen vessel."**

"We have this treasure (the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ) in earthen vessels." (2 Corinthians 4:7.)

Because the believer is distinct from his body, at death, he is taken completely out of the body.

**6. When the believer at death is taken out of the body, he departs to be with Christ.**

As it is written:

"We are confident I say (that is, in face of death) and **willing rather** to be absent from the body,

and to be present with the Lord." (2 Corinthians 5:8.)

The passage may be rendered literally:

"We are confident I say and willing rather to be absent away from our home out of the body, and **immediately** present at **our** home with the Lord."

"**With the Lord.**"

What a phrase is that.

If we had nothing more than those words, how sufficient they would be to throw daylight upon the face of our dead, or into the silent tomb where their beloved body lies.

"Present, at home with the Lord."

Yea! at **our home.**

What grace in that; what balm, what consolation.

That means, received, welcomed, made at ease with our Lord.

"**Immediately** at home with the Lord."

Yes! immediately, that is the force of the tense chosen by the Holy Spirit.

No tarrying! Nay! once out of the body, immediately at home with the Lord.

But where is the Lord?

He Himself has answered.

Just before He left this earth He told His disciples He was going into Heaven to prepare a place for them.

He said:

"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." (John 14:2.)

The Apostle Paul tells us the place has been prepared, and that this prepared place is a city; as it is written:

"He hath prepared for them a city." (Hebrews 11:16.)

We are told the kind of a city; as it is written:

"A city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Hebrews 11:10.)

The Apostle John gives us a full description of it.

It is a city with jasper walls, gates of pearl, street of transparent gold, jeweled foundations, a river and a tree of life; a city where there is no night, but one eternal day.

The Lord has His throne in the city, a throne which is that of the Father also; as it is written:

"And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb." (Revelation 22:1.)

Our Lord Himself tells us He is seated on the throne with His Father: He says:

"I am set down with my Father in his throne." (Revelation 3:21.)

Since our Lord Jesus Christ is on the throne of God, and this throne is in the city, then our Lord is in that city.

To be **with Christ** is, therefore, to be in the city.

Since the believer at death departs to be with Christ, then the believer at death is immediately with Christ in the holy city.

A city in Heaven be it remembered.

And where is that city in Heaven, in what part of Heaven?

The location of the city is determined primarily by the location of the tree of life.

The tree of life is in Paradise; as it is written:

“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” (Revelation 2:7.)

But the tree of life is said to be in the midst of the street of the city; as it is written:

“In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life.” (Revelation 22:2.)

Since the tree of life is in the paradise of God and the same tree is in the city in the midst of it, then the city is identical with the paradise of God.

Before our Lord's resurrection and ascension there was a paradise in hades.

The proof of this as already stated lies in the fact that our Lord the day of His death descended into hades and that He told the thief he should be **with Him** that very day in paradise.

Since the Holy City is in Paradise and the Holy City is in Heaven, then Paradise today is in Heaven. It has taken the place of the one time Paradise in the heart of the earth.

The Apostle Paul tells us where in Heaven Paradise is; as it is written:

“I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether

out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth); such an one caught up to the **third** heaven.

And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth);

How that he was caught up **into** paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” (2 Corinthians 12:23.)

He was first caught up to the third heaven.

After that he was caught up **into** paradise.

Since he was caught up to the third heaven and then into Paradise, Paradise is in the third heaven, the heaven that is “above all heavens.”

As Paradise is in the third heaven and Paradise is identified with the Holy City, then the Holy City is in the third heaven. It is there the glorified Christ is enthroned, it is into that Paradise He took the souls of the righteous when He ascended up on high, it is there into that same Paradise and into the Holy City those who die “in Christ” depart to be, and are, with Him.

#### 7. The State of the Christian Dead.

They are **conscious**.

This is seen in the fact that Abraham, a disembodied soul, according to the declaration of our Lord Jesus Christ, talked and held conversation with the Rich man, a disembodied soul, on the other side of the gulf, equally as able to speak and talk and therefore as conscious as himself.

The Rich man had **memory**.

Hear what Abraham says:

“Son, **remember**.” (Luke 16:25.)

If the unsaved have memory, what poor logic it would be to deny it to the dead in Christ.

**They have interest in those whom they leave on earth.**

This is seen in the case of the martyrs described in the sixth chapter of the Revelation:

“And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” (Revelation 6:10.)

They are told that—

“They should rest for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren should be killed as they were.” (V:11.)

These are the martyrs who will be killed under the Antichrist after the Church has been translated to Heaven; and while the spirit of their appeal will be perfectly justifiable in that hour when the Lord will be sending His hardening judgments on the earth, it is not the spirit of the Christians now in Heaven; nevertheless, it reveals the fact that those who depart at death to be with Christ, retain their interest in the affairs of earth and, under certain conditions, are informed concerning those whom they have left below.

The unrighteous dead are likewise interested in the living from whom death has separated them.

This is seen in the appeal the Rich man made to Abraham.

He says:

“I pray thee therefore, that thou wouldest send him (Lazarus) to my father’s house:

For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.” (Luke 16:27, 28.)

The principle revealed is a general one. If it apply to those who are irretrievably lost, in the nature of the case it must apply to the Christian dead.

**They are clothed with white robes.**

The proof of this is found in the further experience of the martyrs under Antichrist; as it is written:

“And white robes were given unto every one of them.” (Revelation 6:11.)

While this is future it is a **progressive** revelation about the dead in Christ.

A revelation therefore that the dead in Christ are now clothed in the white robe.

It is a demonstration, also, that the soul has **form** as well as substance.

Their condition is—

**Far Better.**

Better than any possible condition in this life; as it is written:

“To depart and be with Christ; which is far better.” (Philippians 1:23.)

But while it is “far better,” it is not the “best.”

The clothing given in Heaven is only temporary, it is **not** embodiment.

**The best thing** is to be **embodied**.

**A human being was created for embodiment.**

The best embodiment is to have a body like that of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is promised to us as Christians.

It will take place at the Lord's Coming.

At that Coming He will raise the body and give it back to the believer, glorified, immortal.

"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." (1 Corinthians 15:51, 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." (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17.)

This is "The Blessed Hope" held out to the Christian; as it is written:

"Looking for that **blessed hope**, and the glorious appearing of our Great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." (Titus 2:13.)

It is for this we are told, as Christians, to wait; as it is written:

"To wait for his Son from heaven." (1 Thessalonians 1:10.)

Christians on earth are to take this attitude.

Christians in Heaven do take it.

Whatever may be the controversies on earth about the Second Coming, there are none in Heaven. All have one mind there. They wait for the Lord to clothe them with immortality.

This "Coming" is always imminent, it might be any hour (an hour when—"ye think not") and in a moment the dead and the living in Christ will be caught up together to meet Him and with Him enter into the place prepared.

### Questions And Answers

#### Question.

What does the Lord mean when He speaks of the death of Lazarus as a sleep?

#### Answer.

The disciples thought he had spoken of "taking rest in sleep."

"Then said Jesus unto them, **plainly**, Lazarus is dead." (John 11:14.)

He had not spoken plainly before.

He had used the word, "sleep" as a figure of speech.

The figure is fitting.

A dead person looks like a sleeping person.

But the facts are self evident.

The person who is asleep is—**not dead**.

The person who is dead is—**not asleep**.

Sleep therefore is applied to the body as a figure of speech and cannot be anything else.

Sleep in Scripture is never applied to the soul.

In actual experience the soul does not sleep.

Dreams prove it does not.

All persons dream, although they may not be conscious of it when they awake.

There are those who while they are asleep become what are known as Sonambulists. They walk in their sleep, they act precisely as people do who are fully awake.

Sleep is applied only to the dead body of the Christian.

It is full of beautiful suggestion.

As the body of the sleeper will eventually awake, so the dead body of the Christian, at the Coming of the Lord, will awake in the beauty of the perfect body and the endless morning.

**Question.**

What does the Psalmist mean when he says:

"In death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" (Psalm 6:5.)

**Answer.**

"Grave" is here **sheol** or **hades**.

"Remembrance" signifies what the Psalmist defines it to be: **thanks, praise**.

In the underworld of the disembodied dead there was no song and no voice of praise. The **rule** there was silence; as it is written:

"The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down in silence." (Psalm 115:17.)

**Question.**

What does the prophet Isaiah mean by this statement:

"They that go down to the pit cannot hope for thy truth." (Isaiah 38:18.)

**Answer.**

Their opportunity to be taught the truth as in **responsibility to life on earth** had passed.

If they had not taken advantage of Moses and the prophets while here they could not receive it in the underworld.

**Question.**

What is the meaning of this passage in Ecclesiastes:

"The dead know not anything . . . for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge in the grave, whither thou goest." (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10.)

**Answer.**

The word, "grave" is **sheol, hades**.

It is simply a declaration that they have been taken out of the activities of this world, all connection with them is at an end; as it is written:

"Neither have they any more a portion forever in any thing that is done **under the sun**." (That is, in this daily life on earth.) (Ecclesiastes 9:6.)

It is a declaration that the things which once moved them in this life no longer occupy them in that nether world.

**Question.**

What does the Psalmist mean by this statement:

"His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." (Psalm 146:4.)

**Answer.**

Thoughts here mean **purposes, plans**; as it is written:

"My days are past, my **purposes** are broken off, even the **thoughts** of my heart." (Job. 17:11.)

Here you see by the law of parallelism, "thoughts" and "purposes" are identical.

It does not mean man himself perishes, ceases to be, but that his earthly plans perish, are at an end forever.

**Question.**

What does the Psalmist mean by this appeal?

"O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be—**no more.**" (Psalm 39:13.)

**Answer.**

The Psalmist means he is going out of this life and will be—**no more—here.**

He prays for strength to fulfill his place before he is finally taken away to be **no more here** amid the activities and responsibilities of the life that now is.

To imagine when he says, "and be no more," he means he will at death cease to exist, is to make him contradict absolutely what he has said so gloriously before.

This is what he said:

"As for me **I will behold thy face** in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, (that is, at the resurrection of his body) with thy likeness." (Psalm 17:15.)

**Question.**

Did the soul of David go to Heaven?

**Answer.**

David himself believed his soul would eventually go to Heaven.

He says:

"God will **redeem my soul** from the **power** of the **grave!** for he shall **receive me.**" (Psalm 49:15.)

The word "grave" is **sheol, hades**, not the burial place of the body, but the place of the disembodied soul of the righteous at that time, in Abraham's Bosom or Paradise.

His expectation was **fulfilled** when our Lord led up the captives of **hades** to Heaven as shown in Ephesians 4.

**Question.**

What does the Apostle Peter mean in Acts 23:4, when he says:

"For David is not **ascended** into the heavens."

**Answer.**

The word "ascended" is never used in relation to the soul, but the body. It signifies, simply, that David had not yet attained unto resurrection. His body was still in the grave.

The proof the Apostle is referring to the resurrection of the body and not any question as to the ascent of the soul is seen in V:29.

"Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and **buried**, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day."

When therefore the apostle uses the word about ascension in V:34, he is referring exclusively to the body of David.

**Question.**

What does the Apostle Paul mean in Acts 13:36:

“For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was **laid** unto his fathers, and saw corruption.”

**Answer.**

The key is found in the expression “**laid** to his fathers.”

The Greek verb used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew word “gather” is the Greek used in this passage; and as the Hebrew cannot be translated by any other word than “gather” the absolutely correct translation of V:36, is as follows:

“**David was gathered** to his fathers.”

This corroborates, demonstrates and proves beyond question what has already been declared, that “gathered to the fathers, neither means death nor the burial of the body, but the transfer of the surviving soul to the company of those who preceded it into **hades**.”

The Apostle Paul therefore teaches that David died, his soul was taken into **hades** and his body saw corruption.

**Question.**

Does the Bible call the soul immortal?

**Answer.**

No! Never!

It would be a philological absurdity to do so.

“Immortal” and “Immortality” in Scripture refer only to the body.

To say a human being is mortal is to say his body is subject to death.

To say he is immortal is to say his body is not subject to death.

The immortality that awaits the child of God refers to the body of glory the Christian will have at the Coming of the Lord.

**Question.**

What then is the meaning of 1 Timothy 6:15.

“Who only hath immortality.”

Does that refer to God, and if so, has God an immortal body?

**Answer.**

“**Our Great God** and Saviour Jesus Christ is the only one who has an immortal body now; but if the word be referred back to God simply as such, then it signifies God alone has **the inhering power** to give a deathless immortal body like that of His eternally incarnate Son.

**Question.**

What does Job 19:26, mean?

“And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.”

Is not Job referring here to the resurrection of the body?

**Answer.**

No!

The true translation of that passage is as follows:

“**Out of my flesh** shall I see God.”

It means Job will continue to live after his body has been destroyed; it means his soul will survive the death of the body; it means Job will, even in his disembodied state, enter into the presence of that Lord to whom his faith looks forward.

Job finally **was** among those whom the Lord took up out of hades into the third heaven.

**Question.**

How is it possible for a soul in its transit from the body to the throne of God to overcome time and distance?

Even if the soul should travel at the rate of a million of miles a minute it would require ages on ages before it could reach the nearest star outside of our solar system, and to pass beyond the limit of this one universe to the throne where He sits who "inhabiteh eternity," would require years and ages for whose numeration we have no figures and a distance that cannot, even, be conceived; and yet the statement of Scripture is, as if the absence of the soul from the body and its presence with the Lord were simultaneous: "absent, present."

Where does a human soul find the power of such a transit?

**Answer.**

Neither time nor distance, nor any extraordinary power on the part of the soul enters into this matter of the believer's absence from the body and presence with the Lord.

**It is not a question of transit at all.**

There are just two facts to face:

1. The soul out of the body is in the environment of, and in union with, both the eternal, omnipresent Spirit of the Lord and His glorified body, that body in which dwelleth "all the fulness of the Godhead."

2. All power is His in Heaven and in earth; that means in all the universes.

Hear what He says (and He said it after He rose from the dead and just before He ascended to the throne of the universes.)

This is exactly what He says:

**"ALL POWER is given unto me in HEAVEN AND IN EARTH."** (Matthew 28:18.)

**ALL POWER IS OMNIPOTENCE.**

The answer to the question in all its details therefore is the one conclusive phrase:

**THE OMNIPOTENCE OF CHRIST.**

To those who once asked Him a question He gave this definition of omnipotence:

**"With God all things are possible."** (Matthew 19:26.)

And He was and is,

**"Our great God and saviour Jesus Christ."** (Titus 2:13.)

God of God, very God of very God.

If therefore the moment should come for any one of us to go we shall have but one consciousness, the consciousness that we are—

**In His Presence.**

**With Him.**

**Where He is.**