

# The Nature of Man

Popular Christianity, as well as all major religions spanning the globe, teaches that the mental consciousness of an individual survives after the death of the physical form. This is frequently referred to as a person's "soul" and sometimes that person's "spirit." Scripture never, ever presents any support for this concept. The terminology of soul and spirit is definitely used. However, false definitions for those terms are pre-supposed in order to accommodate incorrect, self-worshipping conclusions that severely insult our Creator.

The concept of an immortal human consciousness is never the application for that terminology in scripture, as can be definitively and repeatedly proven far beyond any shadow of doubt. This doctrine of the immortality of the soul is an invention of the minds of men with absolutely no foundation of proof in God's word. Initiated with the serpent lie in the Garden of Eden, this false doctrine has continued from Nimrod's Babylon through all forms of pagan doctrines, slithering into all the well populated heart generated religions of the world. In fact, the Bible always presents the nature of man in these terms:

- Man is entirely mortal, both body and mind. There is nothing inherently immortal in mankind. There is no consciousness that lives beyond death, as the serpent suggested in Eden thereby contradicting the divine testimony to Adam and Eve.
- There is no conscious thought after the grave **until the resurrection** (which takes place after Christ returns to the earth).
- Outside of the resurrection there is no hope for anyone for continued life. Without the resurrection we all perish completely and forever. Perishing is eternal death, the complete cessation of any form of life.
- The 'reward' of faithful men and women is everlasting life, which is not a present possession.
- The reward of eternal life and an entrance into God's Kingdom does not take place until after Christ returns to the earth and after the resurrection. All that are accountable to judgment are judged and rewarded together.
- The death state is described as being without praise to God, without thought and without work. This absolutely denies the concept of bliss or torture immediately following death.
- The punishment for the wicked is unconscious eternal death, not conscious eternal torture.
- That which is immortal does not have the capacity to sin. This is the difference between the serpent's testimony and the divine command in the Garden of Eden.

Religious authorities constantly speak of a soul's incapacity to die, despite the fact that the Bible never even once speaks of any soul as being immortal and repeatedly speaks of souls dying. Since a soul has the capacity to die, it certainly cannot be immortal. This doctrine is a fabrication of the deceitful heart of man. All pagan religions were founded on the false premise that we never completely die, just like the serpent told Adam and Eve. As the New Testament writings testify, false doctrines would very quickly overwhelm the Christian believers. They would prefer the teachers who told them pleasant and easy things, like the thought that we never truly die. The far more pleasant ideas of paganism quickly grafted themselves into Christianity, just like the Bible writers had prophesied, warping it into a mere reflection of the self-satisfying delusions of paganism.

## Defining Terminology

What is a soul? It should be understood that a soul is not something that we possess. It is what we are. We don't have a soul. We are a soul. A soul breathes, eats, bleeds and dies according to scripture. It is in

## The Nature of Man

Genesis 2:7 where God describes the creation of a soul: *And 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.* This reference makes it clear that body and breath together constitute a soul. Scripture does not say that man was **given** a living soul, simply that man **became** a living soul. If we take away the body we have no living soul. If we take away the breath we have no soul. One does not 'have' a soul, one **is** a soul.

The original Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament) texts are quite defining in relation to the understanding of what constitutes a soul. The Hebrew word that is translated as 'soul' is *nephesh*. This Hebrew word is directly translated into quite a variety of English expressions: i.e. soul, life, creature, person, man, body, dead and even dead body. If we wish to presume that a 'soul' is immortal then we are linguistically bound to understand that the Hebrew word from which soul is translated (*nephesh*) is also immortal. Why would the translators be foolish enough to translate a Hebrew word supposedly meaning "immortal consciousness" as "dead"? That would be ludicrous. The reason they did translate *nephesh* as "dead" is because there is no legitimate understanding of an immortal consciousness in a human being to be found anywhere in the Bible.

These Bible references below all use the same Hebrew word (*nephesh*) that is predominantly translated as "soul." That word will be underlined.

**Genesis 2:7** *And 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 2:19-20** *Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field*

**Genesis 9:4** *But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.*

**Genesis 14:21** *And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.*

**Numbers 19:11,13** *He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days. Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the LORD*

**Leviticus 21:1** *And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto the priests the sons of Aaron, and say unto them, There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people.*

**Haggai 2:13** *If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean?*

**Judges 16:30** *And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines.*

In this last reference we see the divinely appointed judge named Samson praying to God to let his *nephesh*/soul die with the Philistines. This divinely appointed leader of God's people suffered no delusions about the incapacity of a soul/*nephesh* to die. Samson also expected his *nephesh* (literally meaning *himself*) to die in exactly the same way as the enemies of God's children... the Philistines.

A soul is simply a living breathing entity, whether beast or man. When the breath expires that soul is no longer a living entity, but that 'soul' is nothing but a dead body.

The New Testament was originally written in Greek. The Greek word that is translated soul throughout the New Testament is *psuche*. This word is also translated as life. The quality of life indicated by the Greek word *psuche* is our mortal life. Jesus makes that quite clear during his sermon on the mount:

**Matthew 6:25** *Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life (*psuche*/soul), what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?*

Why would the Messiah advise us to take no thought for our soul/*psuche* if he understood our soul/life/*psuche* to be our immortal consciousness? He didn't believe that! His advise is not to concentrate on the

temporary needs of a soul/life that is concerned with what we eat and wear. Jesus suffered no delusion that a soul/psuche was an immortal consciousness. In fact that psuche/soul/life is exactly what Jesus forfeited in the process of saving mankind.

**Matthew 20:28** *Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*

Jesus sacrificed his psuche... his 'soul'... for the benefit of others. However Jesus is still alive. Clearly a soul is a mortal life, not an immortal life.

**Souls Die** ... Eliminating the Possibility of Any Validity to this Suggested Immortality of Souls

**Joshua 10:28, 30, 32, 35** *And that day Joshua took Makkedah, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof he **utterly destroyed, them, and all the souls that were therein...** And they took it on that day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and **all the souls that were therein he utterly destroyed** that day, according to all that he had done to Lachish.*

Joshua and the Israelites had the capacity to destroy souls. Anything immortal can never be destroyed, Since souls can certainly be destroyed, souls certainly cannot be immortal.

**Ezekiel 18:4, 20** *Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father; so also the soul of the son is mine: **the soul that sinneth, it shall die...** The soul that sinneth, it shall die.*

God's own testimony is that souls certainly die. It is not constructive to obstinately cling to understandings the Creator denies. Souls do not live forever. Souls die.

**The Messiah's Soul Died**

**Isaiah 53:12** *Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because **he hath poured out his soul unto death.***

This whole Isaiah 53 chapter is unmistakably a prophecy of the Messiah. One example is where this chapter is quoted of Jesus in John 12:38-41. Isaiah's prophecy makes it clear that the Messiah would pour out his **soul unto death**. Since the soul of the Messiah would die, how can we imagine any soul is immortal?! We can refer back to Matthew 20:28 (noted above) where we read that Jesus would give his "life" as a ransom. The original Greek word that is translated "life" is *psuche*. The word 'soul' in the New Testament is always translated from that same Greek word - *psuche*. Therefore, we read that Jesus would give his soul (or life) as a ransom. Christ's soul wouldn't be a loan, it would be his sacrifice. Just as Isaiah prophesied, Jesus would pour out his soul (his life) to death. Even the soul of the Messiah died.

**Leviticus 23:30** *And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any work in that same day, **the same soul will I destroy** from among his people.*

God can destroy a soul, but even God can't destroy what is immortal. The very definition of immortal is possessing a nature that does not have the capacity to die or cease to exist. One cannot destroy what is forever. Therefore souls cannot be immortal.

**Psalms 22:29** *All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and **none can keep alive his own soul.***

We cannot keep alive our soul. Since our souls cannot be kept alive they certainly cannot live forever. "going down to the dust" is expressed here as being equal to not keeping alive ones own soul. Just as God condemned Adam and Eve, we are dust and to dust we shall return. This is when the soul dies, when body and breath expire.

**Revelation 16:3** *And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and **every living soul died** in the sea.*

This would be a absurd statement if souls are supposed to be understood as not having the capacity to die. Souls die, therefore souls cannot be immortal.

## The Creator Will Not Fail

God's creation was perfect. We are told he considered his finished work "very good" (Genesis 1:31 *And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was **very good**. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day*). Therefore, death could not have been part of the original creation, since God declared everything to be "very good." Death could never have been part of something God defined as "very good." Death was the punishment inflicted in the Garden of Eden for Adam & Eve's failure (Genesis 2:16-17). Under divine law, during the initial Kingdom of God established at Mt Sinai, anyone who merely touched the dead had to participate in a seven day ritual defined as a sin offering (Numbers 19:9,17). Death could never have been part of anything our Creator confirmed as being "very good." The High Priest (Leviticus 21:10-11) and all those under a Nazarite vow (Numbers 6) were totally forbidden by God from ever coming in physical contact with the dead. This was because they were separated to their God for the period of their vow. Simply touching the dead mandated a ritual uncleanness, indicating a divine unacceptability. Therefore death could never have been part of the initial form of creation that God defined as "very good." That presumption would violate divine principles and testimony. In fact, the best thing that has ever existed since mankind's ejection from the Garden of Eden, the transgressionless son of God, refused the title of simply 'good' ... let alone **very good** (Matt. 19:17). If the best component of this dispensation (Jesus of Nazareth) did not qualify as even being 'good' by his own estimation then what in all of creation (following creation's corruption by sin) could possibly be called "very good?" Death could not have been part of the original features of creation. Death was added after sin corrupted a very good creation. This is exactly the testimony of the Apostle Paul who wrote: *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned* (Romans 5:12). Paul testifies that death entered the world by sin, committed by man. Death had not entered the world before that disobedience. Death was not a principle or component of the original *very good* creation. In fact, death is defined as that last enemy of the divine plan to be defeated. 1 Cor. 15:26 *The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death*. It would be impossible to understand death as both the enemy of God's plan yet also a component of the original creation state divine declared to be "very good". That would be a dramatic contradiction. Death (mortal nature) was introduced directly due to the first sin (contradiction to the Creator's right-ness).

**Rom 5:17, 21** *For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ..... That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Death became a reality because of the offense of one (Adam). It is sin that reigns unto death. Death cannot be separated from sin. Death is the very wages of sin.

**Rom 6:23** *For the wages of sin is death*

This statement would be a lie if death were part of the original very good creative order. In fact sin is described as the very venomous sting that brings death.

**1 Cor 15:56** *The sting of death is sin*

Death did not come by God at creation. Death came by man's failure. Death became of feature of the divine order on the basis of sin's corruption of a previously very good creative order.

**1 Cor 15:21** *For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.*

**James 1:13-15** *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

The only reason death exists, is because of sin. The complete removal of sin will automatically eliminate the last enemy, death, at the conclusion of the Millennial Kingdom.

### The Serpent Testimony

It was the serpent who introduces the denial of death to Adam and Eve.

**Genesis 3:3-4** *Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, **Ye shall not surely die**: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*

It is interesting that all the dominant religious leaders and Christian teachers today agree completely with the serpent - claiming that we don't really die, but continue living after our 'death.' It is reported that our conscious life simply shifts from physical to spiritual... that we simply shed our inconvenient mortal shell, like a serpent sheds its outer skin, with our disembodied consciousness continuing to exist. This dominant Christian doctrine agrees with the serpent testimony but declares the Creator to be a liar.

It is sometimes asked at this point in a discussion or lesson, why God would give man the capacity to fail if He knew Adam and Eve would fail. Perhaps this isn't what we think we would allow to happen if we had designed creation. Perhaps we think God should have prevented any possibility of Adam and Eve's failure, in order to preserve a perfect creation. Our Creator is not that shallow or foolish!

It should be understood that man and woman were the key components of creation. Everything was put under Adam's control. Adam is described as the son of God (Luke 3:38). God wanted a family and a place for his family to live. The faithful are referred to as the "sons of God" throughout scripture. If we and our spouse want to start a family, how do we go about it? Do we trot on down to Toys-R-Us and pick up a Chatty Cathy doll or... two, if we want twins? That robotic doll would only speak to us when we want it to. It wouldn't create messes. It will only do what it would be directed and pre-programmed to do. Wouldn't that just be the perfect child? Of course not! We want children that **choose** to love us. We aren't interested in robots for children. If we don't want perfect little robots, why would God? He wants children that choose to love Him, and therefore must have the capacity to refuse His love and instruction. Love must be voluntary or it isn't love. The Creator is not so shallow as to create people that could not fail.

Adam and Eve failed. However, God cannot fail. Therefore He did not erase creation and begin again. He designed a plan for creation to return to its pristine perfection without sacrificing His standards for righteousness. If salvation for man did not include the physical body (as popular Christianity suggests with its immortal soul teaching) then the Creator most certainly failed. If God's plan does not include all of creation, including the earth and animals and plantlife and geography, then God has failed. Any presumption that excludes God's original plan for creation from becoming a reality for salvation is God-degrading, branding the Creator as a failure. Scripture demonstrates that despite the faithlessness of mankind the Creator's glory will saturate the earth so completely it will be as the water covering the sea

**Numbers 14:21** *But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.*

**Isaiah 11:9** *They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.*

**Habakkuk 2:14** *For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.*

Man's failure had to be an option, so that voluntary love could be offered. The Creator's failure could never be an option.

## What Truly Happens At Death

The Bible is very explicit that there is no conscious activity beyond the grave, with the exception of a potential and eventual resurrection when one is physically and mentally brought back from the dead to their previous state of mortality (an "awakening") for the purpose of judgement after Christ returns to the earth.

**Psalm 146:3-4** *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**.*

Our heart doesn't just stop beating. We don't simply stop breathing. Our **thoughts** cease. We certainly cannot recognize bliss or pain if we can't even think!

**Psalm 88:10-12** *Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah. Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?*

Death is described as the land of forgetfulness (all thoughts cease). The sons of Korah (the authors of this Psalm) ask what benefit to God might be realized in their death, since God's praises are not expressed after death. This would be an impossible understanding if the popular Christian understanding of heaven-going immediately upon death were actually true. The divinely inspired writers of the Bible clearly harbored no such self-glorifying distortion of God's word.

**Psalm 6:4-5** *Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake. For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?*

There is no remembrance of God in death! Death means a cessation of brain activity. There is no thought. Therefore there can be no surviving mental consciousness that wafts heavenward upon the expiration of a body.

**Psalm 115:17** *The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence.*

The dead cannot praise God and death means total silence. That is quite definitive. Haven't the Christianity leaders and teachers every read this?

**Isaiah 38:17-19** *Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back. For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth.*

King Hezekiah's prayer (when God extended his life by 15 years) reveals this Godly man's impression of what happened after death. There is no praise to God and no celebration of God upon death.

**Ecclesiastes 9:5-6,10** *For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun. The dead know nothing, there is no work, no thought, no knowledge in the grave.*

There is no emotion or thought after death. The Bible makes it absolutely clear that there is no conscious thought after death. There is no conscious thought with which to praise God and there can be no recognition of pain. Therefore; it is not the Bible that teaches the serpent promoted understanding that some conscious, ghost like substance of our life continues to exist after our body dies. The Creator told the truth when He warned Adam and Eve that disobedience would mean death, the ending of their lives. It was the serpent that was lying. Who do we choose to believe?

## The Two Categories of Death

Scripture defines two different categories of death, yet popular Christianity has no understanding of this. Jesus references both of these categories when he addresses his disciples about their particular deaths.

**Luke 21:16-18** *And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish.*

Jesus informs his disciples that some of them will suffer execution but comforts them that although they will die they will certainly not perish. Therefore perishing defines a separate category of death. Perishing is forever. Death can be temporary. Those who perish are those who do not qualify as the particular group of people that God and Christ determine to be accountable to judgement. This 'accountable' category of people participate in what is defined as "the resurrection of the just and the unjust" (Acts 24:15). Those who do not qualify for the resurrection to judgement on the basis of accountability die forever. They perish. Those rejected at the judgement seat of Christ following resurrection also experience that forever death of perishing, scripturally defined as the 'second' death.

The sons of Korah offer a corresponding expression of Christ's understanding in a Psalm they authored.

**Psalm 49:12-15,19-20** *Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish. This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings. Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling. But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me... He shall go to the generation of his fathers; the shall never see light. Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.*

Those without understanding will perish. They will die like an animal, like a sheep without any hope of an after-death life. However, God will ransom the lives (souls) of the Sons of Korah (the faithful believers who authored this Psalm) from the power of the grave, along with those others who are not without understanding. Both categories of death are identified in this psalm: the forever death of a beast-like perishing and the temporary death of the divinely obedient sons of Korah.

Jesus references these two categories of dying in a powerful warning about fear.

**Matthew 10:28** *And 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 Gehenna.*

Jesus references the two categories of death here. We are cautioned to avoid the fear of those who can simply kill us but cannot destroy us forever. We are warned to be afraid of the one who can both kill us temporarily as well as killing us forever. This reference is sometimes misapplied to suggest there is a difference between the physical body and what constitutes a "soul." The problem with that understanding is that Jesus makes it perfectly clear that souls can be destroyed. Destruction is certainly not eternal torture. Even God cannot destroy something that is defined by the very impossibility of destruction, as an "immortal" soul would be. Jesus is warning us not to be afraid of mankind who can only kill us. God can still bring us back from the dead at the resurrection. However, Jesus advises us to certainly be afraid of the one (God) who is able to kill us and keep us dead forever. We will address the use of the term "Gehenna" in a subsequent section.

## The Second Death

Many who qualify for the resurrection to judgment, on the basis of exposure to whatever level of divine understanding our judge considers sufficient, will suffer both categories of death, both temporary and permanent. This second category of death is scripturally defined by exactly that term: the second death.

**Revelation 2:11** *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.*

**Revelation 20:6** *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*

These previous two verses highlight those who escape that second death. The next two verses reference those who did not escape that second category of death, the permanent death.

**Revelation 21:8** *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whore-mongers, 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 20:14-15** *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.*

The second death is given the metaphor of a consuming fire... an eternal destruction to the dust and ashes from which they were created (*dust thou art and to dust thou shalt return*).

There are two categories of death referenced throughout the Bible. There is a temporary death from which those determined to be accountable to divine judgement will be awakened from the unconsciousness of the grave to face divine judgement. There is also a permanent death (referred to as perishing which indicates the death of the body and soul, described as dying like an animal) for those who are not accountable to judgement along with those who are accountable to Christ's judgment but are rejected following that judgement.

### The 'Sleep' of Death

Much insight into defining Bible terms can be gained by noting the parallels, similes and metaphors that scripture employs. The condition of death is continuously paralleled to being asleep. This is a perfect parallel when we understand death to be a state of unconsciousness. We awaken out of the darkness into the early light of morning, like the resurrection that is prophesied as following the return of the Son of God, known as the "light of the world." However, if we understand death to be simply an instantaneous transition without loss of consciousness, an unshackling of the pains and limitations of a physical body, then the constant scriptural sleep parallel is highly inappropriate. God and Jesus and the divinely inspired writers of the Bible use this analogy of death being an unconscious sleep repeatedly.

**Deuteronomy 31:16** *And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers.*

The ancestors ("fathers") of Moses were all dead. Moses was 120 years old on the day that he died... the day that God said he would *sleep* with his fathers. God Himself calls death a 'sleep'. Are we not afraid to declare God to be mistaken?

**2 Samuel 7:12-14** *And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son.*

God promises King David that after he died (sleeping with his fathers after his days are fulfilled) God would raise up one of David's descendants, who would be God's son, to sit on David's throne in Jerusalem forever. This is, of course, Jesus (Luke 1:31-33). God certainly understands death to be like sleep.

**1 Kings 2:10** *So David **slept** with his fathers, and was **buried** in the city of David.*

**1 Kings 11:43** *And Solomon **slept** with his fathers, and was **buried** in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.*

These phrases certainly define "*sleeping*" with ones fathers as dying.

**John 11:11-13** *These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, 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.*

Jesus defines the death state of Lazarus as sleeping. Christ's disciples didn't understand the parallel, just like popular Christianity doesn't understand. Then Jesus brought Lazarus back from the dead, awakening him from his death-sleep. That would certainly have been a very mean punishment if we understand



Lazarus to finally have been free from his physical shell and blissfully enjoying paradise. Clearly, that was not Christ's understanding of death. Both the Creator of heaven and earth as well as His son understand death to be like an unconscious sleep, from which one can be awakened with divine power and authority.

### **Awakening from Sleep - The Resurrection**

We were created with the natural urge to fall asleep to darkness and awaken to light. This is a creation parable shadowing the plan of God where the 'sleeping' dead will awaken to judgement at the return of the Son of God, the light of the world. This relationship phrasing is used in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

**Daniel 12:1-3** *And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*

Michael is a name that means "one like God." The great prince, who is like God, will come at a time of great trouble for the Jewish people (to whom the prophet Daniel wrote) and there will be a great awakening of those who "sleep" in the dust of the earth. Some of those will be given the gift of everlasting life and some will not, thereby gaining everlasting contempt for their memory. The key feature we are considering is the reference to death being a sleep from which one is awakened (regaining consciousness) at the resurrection from the dead following the return of the Messiah (the great Prince who is "like God"). We will consider the time-line of this prophecy in more detail later in our considerations.

**1 Corinthians 15:20-21** *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.*

Jesus Christ is identified as the firstfruits of them that "slept" in that he was chronologically the first risen from the dead to immortality. Christ's rising from the sleep of death was different from those re-awakened from the sleep of death before him, such as Lazarus, in that they all died again. Jesus was the first to experience the resurrection to immortality. Resurrection is described as an awakening from the unconsciousness of sleep. The Apostle Paul continues this same sleep-death parallel later in this same chapter when he translates Christ's victory into an eventual benefit to the faithful.

**1 Corinthians 15:51-54** *Behold, I shew 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.*

Paul notes that not all believers will die (sleep) but at the last trump the dead will be raised incorruptible. This explains how the resurrection of Christ is different from the raising from the dead of Lazarus (and the widow of Nain's son, the widow of Zarephath's son, etc). Christ's resurrection was from a dying state to an immortal state, acting as a covering for mortality. This is the transition from mortal to immortal. This will happen for everyone at the same time, following the "last trump." Death is defeated after the resurrection from the dead, not before. This expression of being raised from mortality to immortality and corruptible to incorruptible is not referring to the resurrection from the dead for the purpose of judgement. It signifies the raising from a mortal, dying condition to an immortal, never-subject-to-death-again condition which is exclusively reserved for those who are divinely judged as acceptable by Christ, following his return from heaven. It is when mortal puts on immortality, like a cloak. It is when corruptible puts on incorruptibility. Immortality is an addition, not a current possession.

According to the bible, death should be understood as an unconscious, sleep-like condition from which those who are determined to be accountable to divine judgement (as opposed to those who "perish" like beasts) will awaken to judgement and also hope to be raised yet further from a mortal condition to an immortal condition, from which one will never be subject to the 'sleep' of death ever again.

### **Death is God's Punishment for Sin** **Immortality is a Conditional Promise**

God threatened Adam & Eve with death, not eternal torture in a subterranean realm of fire and darkness. Prior to their condemnation they were in a non-dying state, but certainly not immortal. Immortality would have eliminated any necessity to drive Adam and Eve from the vicinity of the tree of life (Gen. 3:22-24 *And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken*).

In this initial created state of man, when all was "very good" in God's eyes, death was not assured. It was possible, but not guaranteed as it certainly is under the current divinely cursed condition of mortality. Our original parents failed, infecting all of creation with sin. This changed everything. Creation was no longer in a divinely "very good" status. Mankind was now cursed with a dying nature directly due to their sin, from which we hope to be redeemed. Under the terms of mortality, death is assured and inescapable. This mortality is the curse of sin and death from Eden that we hope to escape.

Unfortunately, popular Christianity and all major world religions teach the serpent's lie of not really dying due to sin, that mankind had a dying nature from creation and it is not death from which we need redemption. Eternal torture is supposedly what we wish to avoid, despite the inescapable fact that this particular threat is never once presented in the entire Bible. We are asked to believe that we currently possess immortality. Our potential reward is defined as eternal bliss as opposed to our potential punishment being eternal torture. However, the Bible offers us the conditional hope of immortality and **never once** speaks of immortality as a present possession.

### **Immortality is a future Conditional Gift Limited to True & Faithful Believers**

**Romans 2:5-8** *But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; 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: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath.*

God will give the **gift** of eternal life to some but not all. It is offered to those who **seek** for immortality. But why would we ever be encouraged to **seek** for immortality if it were already a current possession? That would be foolishness. We are not being offered a quality of life, but a nature of life. The disobedient will not be given the gift of eternal life, but will receive indignation and wrath.

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

The wages of sin is death. Death was the punishment inflicted in Eden because of sin. Death was not part of the original 'very good' creation. Paul confirms this understanding: *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned* (Romans 5:12). This is a divine principle: Sin produces death, without exception. Sin must be eliminated from existence if God's plan for creational perfection is going to be achieved. Eternal life is the **gift** of God and only possible through Jesus Christ. The concept of an immortal consciousness (soul) denies the

principle of sin always and inescapably resulting in death and also the fact that eternal life is a conditional gift reserved for few people. The serpent lie of deathless sin violates the righteousness of our Creator, declaring the Creator to be morally wrong for demanding death for sin.

**Titus 1:1-2** *Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.*

Eternal life is our **hope**, not our present nature. We cannot hope for what we already possess. That would be foolishness. Yet this is exactly what almost all the religions of the world promote.

**Titus 3:7** *... through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

Eternal life is our hope, not our present condition. It isn't a quality of life that serves as our reward or punishment (bliss or torture). The potential reward is a category of life, identified as eternal.

**1 John 2:25** *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.*

God and Christ are not so foolish as to promise us what we already possess. Since, eternal life is the promise we look forward to, we cannot already own it. We certainly are not foolish enough to offer other people what they already possess as some kind of incentive to perform our wishes. That would be absurd. Our Creator is not foolish enough to do this either.

**John 6:40** *And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

Those who believe on the Son **may** have everlasting life and be raised up... at the last day. Everlasting life is not an assurance or a present possession. Additionally, it will only be awarded at the last day.

**John 3:16** *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.*

Everlasting life is the reward of the faithful. The alternative is to perish, which is eternal death. Everlasting life is the reward and everlasting death is the only other alternative.

**John 17:1-3** *These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

Jesus, in his beautiful prayer offered before he entered Gethsemane to be arrested, expressed the fact that life eternal is dependent on knowing God and Jesus Christ. This understanding of Christ's is opposed to popular Christianity's proposition that everyone already has eternal life, whether they believe in or know God and Jesus Christ or not. Christ expresses eternal life as being conditional. Popular Christianity and other world religions teach that eternal life is inherent and not conditional at all. They disagree with the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Eternal life (immortality) is certainly not a current possession. It is a future, conditional gift reserved for those who are judged acceptable at the "last day." The words immortal and immortality are never associated with the word soul anywhere in scripture... not even once. Each of the six times one of those words (immortal or immortality) are used in the Bible they refer to either the future reward of the faithful or the nature of our Creator. There is no other application. Death is presented throughout scripture as the complete cessation of life. There is no consciousness in death. At the resurrection at the last day the dead (who are accountable to judgement) will come back to life for the purpose of judgement. The majority will be rejected (as Jesus tells us that *many are called but few are chosen* at the conclusion of two separate judgment parables). The rejected will perish, inheriting eternal death. The approved will inherit eternal life and be invited to enter the kingdom of God.

## **Our Body will Saved**

### **Not Just Our Consciousness and Personality**

Christianity teaches that when we discard our body at death, we are immediately judged and either inherit our reward or punishment. Supposedly, the discarding of our physical body at death uncovers the immortal consciousness hidden underneath that will be either pampered or tortured. The Bible describes this procedure of salvation very differently from this popular understanding. Scripture describes the process of reward inheritance as an addition, not a subtraction. Immortality is described as being added to our bodies as a covering, as an atonement. The Bible never describes a stripping away of the body to reveal any form of inherent immortality inside, as if salvation were a nakedness or uncovering. Scripture repeatedly tells us our bodies must be clothed with immortality, but never immediately following death. This reward takes place after judgement which takes place after the resurrection which takes place after the glorious & powerful return of Jesus to the earth. Scripture only offers salvation based on eternal life being added to our physical construction which houses our consciousness and personality.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54** *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew 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.*

In the context of Paul's examination of the resurrection he describes the salvation process by explaining it as being clothed. Immortality will cover mortality. We do not lose the body in order to be saved. Immortality and incorruptability is added to the body in the salvation process "at the last trump." Eternal life is added to the body. The body is not removed in order to reveal any immortality that was hidden underneath. Our bodies have to be saved along with our consciousness as a living soul is made of body and breath (Genesis 2:7). The body must be redeemed for salvation to be realized... or our Creator has failed.

**Romans 8:20-23** *For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. <sup>22</sup>For we know that the whole creatio groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the **redemption of our body**.*

Every creature was subjected to vanity, but with hope. The bondage of vanity, under which all of creation currently suffers, will be eliminated. This is described as the redemption of our bodies. When the bodies of the faithful are redeemed from the bondage of vanity (sin and death) then all of creation will benefit. Our bodies will be redeemed in the salvation process. We don't lose our bodies in the salvation process. The bondage of corruption is eclipsed by the clothing of our bodies with immortality. It is an addition, not a subtraction. There is no salvation without our bodies. That would mean our Creator failed, which is an impossibility.

**Philippians 3:20-21** *For our conversation (literally, this means citizenship/politeuma) 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.*

Our bodies will be changed to be like Christ's when he comes to us. We don't go to Jesus, he comes to us to change our vile bodies that are currently subject to corruption. We are told our citizenship (conversa-

tion) is in heaven. This detail is expressed repeatedly in scripture. However, that citizenship in heaven is brought to us by Jesus upon his glorious and powerful return. It is never, ever expressed in scripture that we travel to heaven to receive that citizenship. That citizenship is brought to us. That heavenly kingdom is extended to all of creation. Clearly our bodies are a required component for the salvation process.

Our nature is currently one of complete mortality. Our bodies will have to be changed, because we cannot inherit the kingdom as flesh and blood beings (1 Corinthians 15:50). We need to be changed to a spirit nature. This is what Jesus tells Nicodemus: We must be born again to enter the kingdom, born of spirit (John 3:3-5). However, just because we have to be born again (of the spirit) doesn't mean we no longer have physical bodies. Jesus had a physical body after resurrection. He was handled. He ate. He claimed to have flesh and bones (Luke 24:36-43). Jesus promises to extend this bodily immortal nature to his faithful when he returns. There is no disembodiment when inheriting salvation. Salvation will be experienced in the body. Salvation is an addition. It is a covering and not an uncovering. The body is not removed to reveal some imaginary hidden immortality.

## **Immortalization Images**

### **The Mansions From Heaven**

**John 14:2-3** *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.*

Jesus is addressing his closest disciples at the last supper in the upper room, hours before his arrest in Gethsemane. He comforts them with this promise of redemption from the curse of sin and death. Frequently, it is suggested that these words show that our reward is in heaven and the presumption is presented that we must go there to receive it. This is a very odd conclusion since Jesus says exactly the opposite. He promises to return to his disciples. He never invites them to his Father's house to receive those prepared "mansions." The word "mansions" here is the Greek word *mone*, which is also used in verse 23 of the same chapter where it is translated "abode" ... *Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* This 'other' Judas wanted to know how Jesus would reveal himself differently to the disciples than how Jesus would reveal himself to the rest of the world. Jesus answers that both he and his Father would **come to them** (conditional upon loving and keeping the words of God) and make their 'abode' in them. Jesus would bring that mansion/abode (heavenly citizenship) that had been prepared in heaven, directly to the faithful. Once again, we see that Jesus comes to us. We don't go to him to receive the reward. This expression of God and Christ making their 'abode' in the faithful upon Christ's return is exactly what is expressed in the earlier verses. Jesus says that in his Father's house are many mansions (abiding places ... or citizenships, as expressed in Philippians 3:20) and that Jesus would be leaving his disciples and going to his Father's house where these "mansions" are and preparing places for these men who loved and served him. Jesus goes on to promise that he will come back to them and when he does he will draw these men to himself so that they may be where he is. This is not an expression of geography. It is an expression of nature. Jesus will take the faithful to himself, that they may be immortal as he would be at that time. He will come to them with the heavenly reward (the abiding places) so that they may inherit the heavenly citizenships that will fashion our vile bodies into glorious bodies like his. This is when immortality will cover mortality and incorruption will envelop corruption, forever eclipsing the curse of sin and death. This is when our **bodies** will be redeemed. This is when literal salvation takes place on a personal level.

Our inheritance is reserved in heaven for us. Peter expresses this clearly.

**1 Peter 1:3-4** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you*

Our reward... our abiding place... our citizenships are certainly reserved in heaven for us. However, we do not travel to heaven to receive this inheritance. Jesus brings them with him when he returns.

### **Jesus Delivers the Reward to the Faithful**

Jesus tells his disciples at the last supper (John 14) that he will leave them and go to heaven, where he will prepare these "abiding places" or "mansions" and when he comes again he will bring his faithful to himself that they might be where (or "as") he is. He brings this reward (immortal spirit covering) from heaven to us. We do not travel to him to receive our reward. This is a repetitive feature of our hope throughout scripture.

**Revelation 22:12** *And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.*

Jesus brings **every man's** reward with him when he comes. We don't go to him to receive it before anyone else receives that reward.

Hebrews chapter 11 itemizes many faithful men and women (Adam, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Rahab and many others). We are specifically told they will not inherit perfection without us.

**Hebrews 11:39-40** *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.*

The faithful who are identified here had already died. We are specifically told these divinely approved people will **not** be made perfect without us. This statement is one of many Bible statements that eliminates any possibility of anyone receiving their heavenly reward immediately upon death.

**1 Corinthians 15:21-23** *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.***

Those that belong to Christ receive life after he comes back to them. He will be bringing their reward with him when he returns: the redemption of their bodies, their heavenly citizenship, their heavenly abodes. No one receives their reward until after Christ returns to the earth, bringing the reward of the faithful with him from heaven.

### **Clothed With Our Heavenly Dwelling Place**

**2 Corinthians 5:1-4** *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this 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. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.*

Here Paul comforts us by telling us that **if we die** (our earthly house of this tabernacle dissolves) **we have an eternal spirit nature** (an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens... our heavenly citizenship... our heavenly mansion or abode) **reserved in heaven for us** (eternal in the heavens). **We are anxious** (we groan, earnestly desiring) **to have our natural bodies covered with the eternal spirit nature from heaven** (be clothed upon with our house that is from heaven). *If so that being clothed, we shall not be found naked...* this refers back to the curse from Eden when death was introduced. When

Adam & Eve first sinned they immediately recognized their nakedness and desired to cover their shame, using the divinely unacceptable fig leaf aprons to cover the shame of their nakedness that was a direct consequence of their sin. When the immortal spirit nature from heaven covers our cursed mortal nature, we will no longer be ashamed before God and our "covering" will be complete and perfect before God. **We mortals suffer under the current curse of mortality** (*for we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened*), **not that we wish to die** (*not for that we would be unclothed*) **but we do wish to inherit immortality** (*but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life*). This last statement in verse four perfectly confirms our understanding as correct when it equates being "clothed upon" to "mortality being swallowed up of life" and being unclothed to the dying nature of mortality.

Immortality swallowing up mortality is the answer to the curse of sin and death in Eden that subjected all of creation to vanity, when Adam & Eve were ashamed because of their nakedness immediately after sin was introduced into creation. The permanent covering (which is what the word 'atonement' means) of immortality is the answer to mankind's shame for nakedness. Once immortality envelops our shameful mortal nature we will no longer be ashamed before God.

Immortality is always spoken of being added to us. It is not inherent. The body is never spoken of being discarded in order to reveal the immortality underneath anywhere in the Bible. We do not receive our reward until after Jesus comes back to the earth he left, powerfully and gloriously. We do not go to Jesus to receive salvation. He comes to us with that salvation, which will be added to our bodies, covering the nakedness of our shame before God for sin.

## The Progression of Events Concerning Salvation

### Common Christian Understanding

1. The kingdom is currently in progress in heaven
2. An individual dies
3. Individual judgement immediately follows death
4. Reward: eternal bliss or Punishment: eternal torture
5. Jesus returns briefly to earth
6. Resurrection (but no one really understands its purpose in this warped timeline)

### Christ's Gospel of the Kingdom

1. Christ returns to Earth with power and glory
2. The resurrection takes place
3. Everyone that is accountable is judged together
4. Reward: eternal life or Punishment: eternal death
5. The faithful inherit the kingdom

It has already been powerfully demonstrated that the progression of events taught by the dominant Christian organizations is dramatically opposed to what the Bible teaches. No one goes to Jesus to receive their reward. He comes to us with that reward. The reward itself is the nature of immortality, inheriting the divine nature. God is not so foolish as to conditionally promise what we already possess.

Now we need to examine the progression of events spelled out in God's word. The whole process begins with the personal return of Jesus Christ to the earth with the angels and great glory. There is no judgement, no punishment or reward and no inheriting of the kingdom... until Christ returns powerfully, visibly and gloriously! This progression is repeated in the same terms several times throughout both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

### Daniel's Timeline

**Daniel 12:1-3** *And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the*

*brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.* "Michael" is a Messianic name representing the Christ, just like Emmanuel and Branch. Michael (meaning "Who is like God") is described as the "*great prince that stands for the children of the people.*" The Messiah is frequently referred to as a prince (Isaiah 9:6; Ezek. 44:1-3; 46:1-4,8,10,16-18; Dan. 8:25; Acts 3:15; 5:31; Rev. 1:5). The Michael/Prince/Messiah *stands up* or 'appears' at the time of greatest peril for the people of the Prince. The Messiah would be Jewish and therefore this represents the greatest time of peril for the Jewish people, for whom the book of Daniel was originally written. At that particular time everyone found "written in the book" would be delivered. This is the "book of life" referred to throughout scripture that identifies God's faithful for whom salvation is reserved ( Malachi 3:1; Exodus 32:32-33; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12; 20:15; 21:27; 22:19). The resurrection is presented as the awakening of those who sleep in the dust of the earth. These dead will then be judged and rewarded or punished. The reward is described as everlasting life. The punishment is shame and everlasting contempt. This prophecy presents the gift of everlasting life following judgement ... which follows resurrection ... which follows the return of the Messiah in a timeframe of incredible peril for the Jewish people. This progression of events invalidates the common teaching of popular Christianity.

**Daniel 12 Progression  
of Events**

1. The Messiah returns (Michael the great prince stands up)
2. The resurrection (those that sleep in the dust of the earth awake)
3. The judgment takes place
4. The reward of the faithful is everlasting life. The punishment for the wicked is shame & everlasting contempt.
5. The kingdom is enjoyed by the immortalized faithful who shine like the stars for ever & ever

This timeline for the appearance of the Messiah places everyone's reward after that appearance, that return of Christ to mankind. Many (not all) who sleep in the dust of the earth will awaken for judgment, following which they will receive an eternal inheritance of either eternal glory or eternal shame.

**The Timeline of Jesus Christ**

**Matthew 25:31-46**

*When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: <sup>33</sup>And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. 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: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.*



Jesus presents this parable to four of his disciples on the Mount of Olives overlooking the Jerusalem temple. He has just prophesied of the end of God's kingdom in Israel at the hand of the Romans that would come in the four years between AD66-70 under the Roman Generals Vespasian and Titus. Jesus then goes on to present three parables to these disciples (Peter, his brother Andrew, John and his brother James... Mark 13:3-4). After the parable of the 10 wedding attendants and then the parable of the three servants with investment responsibilities Jesus offers the parable of the sheep and the goats. A very specific and structured time table is presented. The tone of the parable is set by the first word "when," as in *when the son of man shall come in his glory*.

This is the unmistakable progression of events presented in this parable:

1. Jesus comes with glory ... vs. 31
2. Judgement takes place... vs. 32-33
3. Those approved by judgment inherit the kingdom ... vs. 34
4. Punishment & reward is distributed, which are both expressed as 'everlasting'... eternal life is the reward and everlasting punishment is reserved for the rejected.

The nature of that everlasting punishment is detailed in 2 Thess. 1:7-9 matching the terminology and the progression to this parable: *And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.* The everlasting punishment promised in Christ's parable will therefore be everlasting **destruction**. It is not everlasting, conscious torment! It is not torturing a component of God's essence and nature (immortality). The wicked will be destroyed. They will cease to exist. They will perish. All that will eventually exist will be in perfect harmony with the Creator... because God cannot fail!

The 'resurrection' is not directly identified in this schedule presented in the parable of Matthew 25. The resurrection to judgment is assumed, which we can confirm from other teachings of Jesus Christ. However, this progression absolutely obliterates any possibility of the progression of events suggested by common Christian teaching. There is no salvation or redemption from the Edenic curse of sin and death until **after** Jesus returns to the earth with power and glory.

### **Where Does the Resurrection Fit in Christ's Timeline?**

**John 5:28-29** *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.*

According to Jesus, resurrection precedes judgement and reward... despite what anyone else may suggest. There is no judgement or reward prior to the resurrection! This is why the apostle Paul declares that without the resurrection we might as well eat drink and be merry for we will all perish without the resurrection.

**1 Cor. 15:16-19** *For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And 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.*

Paul tells the Corinthian believers that without the resurrection we perish (cease to exist forever). Paul only offers two options: this life and life after resurrection. If we eliminate the life after resurrection (which always follows the return of Jesus Christ, all through the Bible) then our only alternative is this

mortal life which is cursed with sin and death. If there were no resurrection then those believers who already died (fallen asleep in Christ) have perished (meaning dead forever... remember Jesus told his disciples they would die but not even a hair of their head would perish). This is why Paul comments in verse 32: *If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die.* Paul reasons that if we conclude that there is no hope in the resurrection then we might as well indulge in every thing this accursed life has to offer, eating-drinking-and making merry, because there is nothing left but death. Paul obviously envisioned absolutely no hope after death except the resurrection, which takes place only after the glorious and powerful return of Jesus Christ. The Greek and Roman pagans all believed in an immediate after-life, but the Apostles did not.

### **Resurrection Precedes Any Divine Recompense**

**Luke 14:13-14** *But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.*

Jesus teaches that the recompense (reward) for generous believers will not happen until the time of the resurrection. Jesus saw no possibility of rewarding the faithful before the resurrection, which we know he defines as happening after he returns to the earth with power and glory.

### **Our Judgement Follows Christ's Reappearance**

**2 Timothy 4:1** *I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.*

The apostle Paul, inspired by God to write this letter, tells us that Jesus will judge the living (*the quick*) and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom. Jesus does not judge anyone prior to his appearing and no one enters his kingdom until after his appearing. This also tells us that the living and the dead will be judged together, time-stamped as "after Christ's appearing."

These promises and prophecies make it clear that no one is judged or rewarded or punished until after Christ's personal and glorious return to the earth and after the resurrection takes place. The teachings of popular Christianity oppose the teachings of the Bible but mirror exactly what the pagans and heathen of multiple nationalities down through the ages have believed, listening to their deceptive hearts and believing whatever their imaginations preferred. We should not believe the serpent testimony, that we don't really die just because we sin. That is exactly what the religions of this world have believed for thousands of years... preferring the serpent's testimony above the Creator's.

The truth of the matter is that human beings are completely mortal. When we die, when our soul dies, there is no conscious existence that continues. Our only option for further life comes with the resurrection. If we are judged acceptable by Christ after his return to Earth we will be awarded the divine nature, which is not capable of sin.

### **Salvation Is An Addition - Not a Subtraction**

In the scriptural timeline we see that salvation follows Christ's judgement, which follows the resurrection which follows the visible, powerful and glorious return of Jesus Christ from heaven. Now we need to determine the nature of that salvation. We have already determined it is a transition from the curse of mortality to the inheritance of immortality. It is interesting to note the consistent scriptural terms in which that immortality is acquired. It is spoken of as a rebirth and also as a covering, indicating an atonement (as atonement literally means 'to cover'). This covering feature is exactly the opposite process by which popular Christianity defines the salvation transition. They express the salvation process as an uncovering.

It is often presumed by Christians that salvation or damnation takes place immediately after our individual deaths, without any dependence upon the return of Christ from heaven or any resurrection. This salvation process is understood to be an uncovering, which in a sense would be an image of nakedness. Nakedness, and the shame of naked exposure was the direct result of the introduction of sin into a previously *very good* creative order in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3). It is presumed that upon death the physical body is stripped away to release the immortal consciousness trapped within the body so that it might either enjoy eternal bliss or suffer eternal torture. Therefore salvation is understood as the uncovering of what is unscripturally identified as the immortal soul. That process would also not qualify as a "rebirth" as Jesus explains to Nicodemus (John 3:3 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*). That would be more of a release from jail than a rebirth. A rebirth indicates a completely new life, not the simple separation, removal and discarding of a mortal shell trapping an immortal consciousness within its frame.

### The Salvation Covering Procedure

The Immortalization procedure, following an acceptance by our judge (Jesus Christ) following his return to the earth from the right hand of God, is expressed frequently throughout the New Testament as an added covering. This projects the consistent understanding of atonement. Atonement is often inappropriately minimalized into just forgiveness. This is not simply incorrect but highly offensive to our Creator. This subject is addressed comprehensively in the chapter about [The Nature of Evil](#). However, in the context of our consideration on the cursed mortal nature of man we should understand the path to immortality is through an addition, an added covering and certainly not an uncovering of the mortal frame at death to release an immortal consciousness.

This is why the Apostle Paul repeatedly defines the transition from mortality to immortality as a covering.

**1 Corinthians . 15:50-55** *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew 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.*

We "put on" immortality on top of mortality...a covering... an addition and not a subtraction. We "put on" incorruption" over corruption... an addition and not a subtraction.

The bride of Christ, redeemed from the power of sin and death, are appropriately described as being clothed in white robes that have been made white in the blood of our Messiah (Revelation 19:7-8; Revelation 7:13-17). This immortalization portrait maintains the 'covering' theme of immortalization... the 'atonement' image that reconciles us from guilty sin and saves (cleanses) us from the curse of sin nature, for which we bear absolutely no guilt whatsoever.

This salvation 'covering' theme is why the composite image of the immortalized saints in Rev. 10 is defined as being 'clothed' with a cloud.

**Revelation 10:1** *And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:*

The cloud is frequently used as a symbol not simply for the presence, power, nature and glory of our Creator. The image of the cloud is extended to those approved of God to inherit His nature and glory

## The Nature of Man

through the process of immortalization. This is why Luke 9 presents the transfiguration in the context of the cloud from which God speaks as enveloping the 6 men: the transfigured Jesus, Moses, Elijah, Peter, James and John (Luke 9:34-35). This is why Paul comforts the believers in Thessalonica who had lost loved ones to the grave with the understanding that the dead and the living *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.* (1Thessalonians 4:17-18). Both the cloud and the air are consistent shadow representations throughout divine expressions as representing the inheritance of the divine nature.

**2 Corinthians 5:1-4** *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: 3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. 4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.*

The prospect of our death (our "earthly house" is our mortal body) should not distress us due to the promise of the heavenly house (immortal spirit nature) that will clothe/cover/atone our shameful naked mortality... when mortality is swallowed up of life.

Paul expressly highlights the understanding that immortality will cover the shameful nakedness our mortal nature when Christ brings the reward of immortality to the faithful from heaven upon his return to earth from heaven.

Salvation should be understood as an addition and certainly not a subtraction, as popular religions suggest. Inheriting the nature of God is a covering, an atonement, that both eliminates guilty sin and the unclean nature that produces guilty sin.