



Bible Prophecy Guide

Dead or Alive?

Summary 11

Revelation 14:6-7 – The Bible speaks of a judgment during the time of the end.

1 Corinthians 15:13, 17-18 – The Bible speaks of a resurrection to come when the dead will rise from their sleep.

John 14:2-3 – The Bible speaks of a literal heaven and that Jesus is preparing a place for us before He comes to take us home.

Romans 6:23- the Bible says that the wages of sin is death. If we take away the need for the gift of eternal life because we already have it, then we take away the need for a Savior.

2 Timothy 1:10 – Jesus died so we could be freed from the penalty of eternal death. But such a gift must be accepted.

1 Timothy 1:17 & 6:16 – God alone has immortality.

Based on what we just learned from Scripture, think of the logical conclusion one must arrive at if they hold to the idea of the immortal soul. If when you die you go directly to heaven or hell or somewhere between, then that means that there is no need for a judgment since their fate had to be determined at death in order to know where to send them. If the dead go somewhere after death, then there is no need for a resurrection since they are already alive and where they need to be. If they have already gone where they are supposed to go and there is no resurrection, why do we need a second coming? And if the dead never died but went on to live somewhere else, then why did Jesus need to die since the purpose of his death was in order to give us the choice of eternal life. And if you take away the cross, you have essentially taken away Christianity. Indeed, the implications of a theology that teaches life after death are far reaching and detrimental to the Christian faith. Maybe that was why Satan's first lie was, "you shall not surely die."

For many, the concept of the soul is rather complicated. Scripture gives a rather simple explanation.

Genesis 2:7 – Often when you want to know how something is made, you ask for the ingredients. The creation account of how man was made states that dirt plus the breath of God made a living soul. Take away either ingredient and you no longer have a living soul. It's that simple!

Genesis 12:5- Souls are equated with souls.

Genesis 35:18 – Her soul departed which is her life.

Matthew 16:26 & Luke 9:25 – Clearly soul is equated with the person.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 – The Bible makes it clear that upon death these two ingredients separate. Some protest stating that the spirit returns to God and that this is a ghostly type of person. However based on the creation record, we would surmise that this is nothing more than the breath of God. This is confirmed by the next text.

Acts 12:23 – Herod died and gave up the ghost meaning the breath of life.

John 19:30 – Jesus gave up his spirit and died. Meaning he gave up his life.

John 20:17 – Jesus after his resurrection said to Mary, I have yet to ascend to my father. So his spirit cannot refer to his person but to his life or breath.

Job 27:3 – According to this passage, if read in the King James Version, you will see that spirit is referred to as being in the nostrils. Many modern translations simply translate the word breath but the point is that the word in Hebrew can be translated either way. This word here in Job 27:3 is the same Hebrew word that is translated spirit in Ecclesiastes. Thus it might be better translated in Ecclesiastes 12:7 as breath instead of spirit.

Ezekiel 18:4 – The Bible is clear that the soul (human being) who sins will die.

Genesis 3:4 – Satan promoted this lie of the immortality of the soul to Eve way back in the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 2:9 – God created a tree of life that was required for their eternal life.

Genesis 3:22-24 – God had to take away the tree of life so that man would not live forever. If man was inherently immortal, why the issue of the tree. See Revelation 22:2, 14 to find when and where we will be given access again to this tree.

1 John 5:11-12 – We have been given eternal life. Not will be given but have been given. Such a life is given to us in Jesus. So how is this to be reconciled with the notion of death.

If you have fallen in with some who are called Christians, but who do not admit this (truth-of the resurrection), and venture to blaspheme the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; who say there is no resurrection of the dead and that their souls, when they die; are taken to heaven; do not imagine that they are Christians. - Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho, chap. 80 in ANF, Vol 1, P. 239. (Died in AD 165)

Biblical Teaching about Death

Ecclesiastes 9:5-6 – The dead know nothing. Thus the Bible is clear that they aren't watching us from above or below.

John 11:11-14, 39 – Jesus referred to the death of Lazarus as a sleep. Notice too that when He resurrected him from the grave, He commanded that he come forth, not down or up.

John 11:25-26 – Jesus is referring to the fact that those who trust in him will never die meaning they will never die the eternal death. For in the context of this statement, he had just referred to death as a sleep and had occurred with Lazarus when he slept in the grave in death.

Acts 7:60 – Stephen fell asleep

Acts 2:29, 34 – Peter made it clear that David was dead and in the grave and that he had yet to ascend to heaven.

1 Corinthians 15:17-18 – To fall asleep is not the same as perishing.

John 3:16 – Doesn't promise we won't sleep (the 1st death); He just promises the righteous that they won't perish in the 2nd and final death. See below.

Revelation 21:8 – We will look at this more in a later study, but it is important to recognize for now that there is a second death mentioned in the Bible that is designated for the wicked.

John 5:28-29 – The Bible describes two resurrections, one for the righteous, and one for the wicked.

Revelation 20:6 – Those who rise in the first resurrection need not fear the 2nd death which is eternal. For those in Christ do not perish (suffer the 2nd death.)

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 – The dead in Christ (those who died trusting in Jesus as their Savior) will arise from the grave at the second coming of Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:51-54 – We put on immortality at the 2nd coming, not at death.

2 Peter 3:15-16 – Peter said Paul had some things that were hard to understand and that some will twist what he says to their own destruction. For example, some have taken Paul's words, absent from the body, present with the Lord to mean something he never intended.

2 Corinthians 5:1-10 – In the previous chapter (4:16-18) we see Paul is contrasting life on this earth with the life to come. Then he explores this idea in the first part of chapter 5. He contrasts the tent we live in now with the building we will live in later. Tent or tabernacle is temporary (Job 4:19, 10:9) and represents the mortal body. But the permanent building (this word is in contrast to the word tent) is our immortal body. 2 Peter 1:13-15 compares a tent to an immortal body. Peter will lay off this tent at the moment of his death. Paul says that the building in heaven is made without hands. Mark 14:58 – Jesus compared his body to an earthly temple made with hands and contrasted it to a temple made without hands or an eternal body. Luke 24:39-43 – Jesus' resurrected body was a permanent building and was a physical body. 2 Corinthians 5:2 – In this mortal body we groan to be clothed with our immortal body. Romans 8:23 – Same notion here makes it clear that the desire is for our heavenly body. 2 Corinthians 5:3 – So three options exist: to be clothed with present body or to later be clothed with the eternal body, or naked which implies death. 2 Corinthians 5:4 – We desire to have our mortal bodies swallowed up by an immortal body and to skip death (being naked or unclothed). 1 Corinthians 15:50-55 – Paul here compares our bodies to clothing when he uses the notion of "Putting on." The mortal is clothed with immortality at the resurrection. Clearly 2 Corinthians 5 is a statement of desire for the resurrection at the 2nd coming. In Philippians 3:20-21, Paul makes it clear that we eagerly wait for Jesus to transform our lowly body (tent) to our glorious body (building). 2 Corinthians 5:7-8 – While in our mortal body, we are absent from the Lord. That is we walk by faith that one day we will have that immortal body. Therefore, Paul says that he is confident in the hope of one day being absent from this mortal body and present with the Lord in our immortal body. Paul was clear that to be present with the Lord would begin at the 2nd coming according to 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17.

Revelation 21:4 – There will be no more death in heaven.

To summarize, the Biblical teaching on death states:

- Dead know nothing
- Death is a sleep
- David sleeps in the grave
- Dead in Christ arise at 2nd coming
- At 2nd coming the righteous receive immortality
- No more death in heaven

Do the wicked not suffer for eternity in hell?

When does Hell Take place?

2 Peter 2:9 – The wicked have a time of judgment reserved for them. It has yet to come.

Matthew 13:40-42 – Hell will occur at the end of time.

Where does Hell take place?

2 Peter 3:7-10 – Hell will occur on earth. The wicked will be destroyed by fire just like the wicked in Noah's day were destroyed by the flood. The earth will be cleansed by fire and the wicked who held onto sin will be destroyed because they wouldn't let go.

How long does Hell last?

Revelation 20:10 - According to the meaning of the Greek word for "forever," the term means "a space of time, as a lifetime, a generation" - (G. Abbott Smith, A Greek Lexicon of the New Testament). Scripture supports such a definition.

1 Samuel 1:22, 28 – Hannah promised to dedicate Samuel to the Lord forever but in verse 28 we learn that this means as long as Samuel was alive.

Jonah 2:6 – Clearly Jonah wasn't in the fish forever, but as far as he knew, he would be down there forever, in other words, for the rest of his life.

Revelation 21:1 – The old heaven and earth that was destroyed or cleansed by fire will be replaced with a new heaven and earth.

Origins of Eternal Health

- Persians suggest that Good & Evil are both co-eternal forces.
- Plato – Popularizes immortality of the soul and thus places the evil eternal souls in torment.
- Early Christian leader Tertullian promotes teaching of the immortal soul and eternal hell in the 3rd century.

Romans 6:23 – The righteous will enjoy eternal life; the wicked will receive eternal death which means they will be gone and know nothing for eternity. They were destroyed by the fires of hell.

1 John 5:11-12 – Without Jesus, there is no life. Thus to suggest that there were or are people alive somewhere else, would deny the truth of God's Word.

Revelation 20:14 – The wicked suffer the second death which entails a lake of fire.

Malachi 4:1,3 – The wicked will be burned up.

Ezekiel 28:18-19 – Satan will become ashes and be no more forever.