

# LIFE AFTER DEATH

## Part two

Following is the list of often heard controversial views of life after death asked in Part One. Compare them to God's absolutes in Part One and decide for yourself.

### **1. Man has an immortal soul that cannot be destroyed.**

Compare this statement to absolutes 1, 5, 6 & 12 in Part One.

God's word tells us in I Timothy 6:16 (Speaking of the Father) "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting."

Also in I Corinthians 15:53, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

And in Romans 2:7 (speaking of rewards to come) "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life." We do seek it, it will be one of our rewards, but it will not be literally given to us until Christ returns. Even Martin Luther called belief in an immortal soul "a Catholic lie".

No part of man is immortal. "...for dust thou art and to dust shalt thou return" (Gen, 3:19).

"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit (breath) shall return unto God who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7). Man became a living being when God gave him the breath of life.

**2. At death the body returns to dust, but the spirit goes to heaven (or hell) fully conscious.**

Compare to Absolute 6, also Job 14:14-15.

As William Tyndale appropriately asked “why is there a resurrection if we are already immortal?” The dead are not conscious until after the resurrection. Are you conscious when you're asleep? The spirit is awakened at the resurrection, which will be at Christ's coming (I Thes. 2:19, 4:16; I John 2:28).

**3. The spirits of the dead are conscious and are right now in heaven, hell or purgatory.**

Where does the Bible say that? The Bible does say the dead are asleep. "His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish" (Ps 146:4).

Compare to Absolutes 3 and 12.

**4. Since the resurrection of Christ, all the dead saints and all saints that die in this age go directly to heaven.**

Compare to Absolutes 2, 3, 6, 12, & 13.

What about David? "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day." Also, "For David is not ascended into the heavens..." (Acts 2:29 & 34).

**5. Those saints that were resurrected when Christ rose went with Him to heaven, never to die again** (Matt. 27:52-53).

They were resurrected to a physical life and died a normal death, just as all the other dead who were brought back to life

mentioned in the Bible. Note that none of them said anything about being in heaven, hell or anywhere in between.

## **6. Under the right conditions, the dead can communicate with the living.**

“Should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living” (Isa. 8:19)? The dead cannot communicate with the living, but there is a spirit world that can. See Absolute 6.

In the case of King Saul, the witch and the “supposed” appearing of Samuel (I Sam. 28:11-19); if you choose to believe the apparition was really Samuel it would prove that Samuel’s spirit was not in heaven as he came up out of the earth. Also, the “ghost” made reference to being at rest. That doesn’t sound as though he was conscious, but it does describe sleep. He also said, “Tomorrow you and your sons will be with me.”

If good people consciously go to heaven at death as some claim, then certainly Samuel should have been in heaven, but the witch saw him “rising from the earth.” Therefore, we must conclude that Saul and his sons were going to be in the earth the next day. None of them were in, or went to, heaven. Neither did they go to a so-called “fiery hell”. Whatever or whoever appeared unto Saul was not Samuel (Ecc1. 9:5-6) but most likely a demon masquerading as Samuel.

## **7. The thief on the cross went to heaven with Christ that very day.**

“And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:42-43). Well, it would seem so, but consider:

When did the thief ask to be remembered? Wasn't it when Christ was to come into His Kingdom? Didn't Jesus tell Mary that He had not yet risen to the Father, and that was three days after He was crucified (John 20:17)? Remember, Christ was in the tomb for three days and three nights, just as He said He would be (Matt. 12:40). Jesus was not in paradise that day, neither was He in His kingdom; He was in every sense of the word dead. If Jesus had been conscious and in heaven (or a blazing hell) during that time He then was not really dead and He would not have been who He said He was.

Punctuation was not used until about the 14<sup>th</sup> century and was applied according to their understanding at that time. Why not put the comma where it makes sense, after “*today*” instead of “*thee*”? The thief is awaiting resurrection, along with everyone else, which will be at the last trump.

## **8. Enoch did not die but went straight to heaven, because God took him (Genesis 5:24).**

Genesis does not say Enoch did not die, nor does it say he went to heaven. Hebrews 11 plainly says all the patriarchs died, and then said something about Enoch that it didn't say about the others: Enoch pleased God and was translated so that he should not see death. Paul is speaking of the second

death, which has no power over those in the first resurrection (Rev. 2:11, 20:6).

Did you know that if you are among the elect, you have been translated, and will not see death? (*Some might say “born again”; I believe the word “conceived” of the Holy Spirit to be more accurate.*) Yet, we know we will die, so what death is being referred to here? “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1:12-14) see also John 5:24 and Rev. 20:6.

There is also a physical translation, consider the rest of Hebrews 11:5: “...and was not found, because God had translated him (Heb. 11:5). Compare this to how Jacob was “carried over” (“translated” - same Greek word) to Sychem and then buried (Act 7:16). The Greek word “metatithem” intimates a general meaning of transfer, transport, change sides, etc. (Strongs) but does it mean transferred to heaven?

Moses died and was buried by God and could not be found as it would seem like Enoch (Deut. 34:5-6). Moses lived 120 years and then died; Enoch lived 360 years and died. No one knew where either of them was buried. Compare to Absolutes. 8 & 10.

## **9. Lazarus is in heaven and the rich man is in hell**

Most Bible authorities consider Luke 16:19-31 to be a parable and not an actual event. The point being that if they won't believe Moses or the prophets, then even though one speaks from the grave, they still won't listen. Review parable definition in part one.

Others believe this to be a proof that the soul goes to heaven or a fiery hell at death and that they both are receiving their rewards at that time. But rewards are not given until Christ comes back (Matt. 16:27), which suggests another view.

We read in Matthew 13:49-50, "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: (this would have to be at the great white throne judgment - the final resurrection) there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." They will definitely be in torment at that time (Rev. 20:11-15).

Could it be that this whole scenario takes place at the time of the Great White Throne Judgment? The rich man, having just awakened (to a physical resurrection from the sleep of death), is about to be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15). He has no knowledge of the passing of time but does see the horror that's before him. He can also see those in the kingdom (Luke 13:28).

This would explain the great gulf that was between them, he has just been resurrected physically (as is described) and

Lazarus in his glorified spiritual body. For a more in depth study of this subject see study guide Lazarus and rich man.

**10. Moses and Elijah are in heaven because Peter, James and John saw them talking to Jesus at the transfiguration.**

Peter, James and John saw a supernatural *vision* of the future, so stated by Jesus Himself (Matt. 17:9). Peter saw a *vision* involving the sheet with the unclean animals. Paul had a *vision* of the Macedonian pleading for the gospel to be preached to him. Daniel also saw *visions* of the future. See *vision* definition in part one.

**11. Elijah went to heaven without dying because Elisha saw him go up to heaven in a whirlwind.**

“And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven” (II Kings 2:11). Without question Elijah went up to heaven, it says so right there, but how does that stack with God’s absolutes?

Christ himself said, “no man has ascended to heaven” (John 3:13). Also, “it is appointed unto *men* once to die” (Heb. 9:27), death has passed unto all men, for all men have sinned. Was Elijah special, something other than just a man? James tells us that Elijah was a man of like passions just as we are (James 5:17). In Hebrews 11:32 we read that all the great men of the Bible died, including the prophets. Certainly Elijah ranked as one of the greatest of the prophets. Is this a contradiction or just

something we don't understand? Of necessity we must look deeper into scripture for obviously something is being overlooked.

Are we sure that the heaven Elijah went up to was the heaven that no man has ascended to? There are at least three heavens mentioned in the Bible. Paul speaks of a vision of the third heaven (II Cor. 12:2-4), which he describes as paradise. We would assume this is at or near the inner or outer court of God's throne as represented by the earthly temple, which was a pattern of the heavenly temple (Heb. 8:1-5). This would be the heaven that no man has ascended to. How then could that be the heaven that Elijah went up to?

Another heaven mentioned in the bible is the expanse of the vast universe (Ps. 8:3, Gen. 1:15-17). Certainly, this would not be the heaven he went up to as it could not sustain life. But, there is yet another heaven mentioned. It is described as where birds fly, where the dew of heaven drops down, etc. (Gen. 27:28, Deut. 33:28). It is that part of our atmosphere that supports life (biosphere). Could that be the heaven that Elijah was taken up to? If so, perhaps he didn't die at that time. That would explain how it is that a letter could come from him about ten years later (II Chron. 21:12-15).

Apparently, it was no surprise to anyone that Elijah was going to be removed, since Elisha was reminded of that several times. Those who witnessed the whole event must have understood that he didn't go up to the third heaven, because they went looking for him (II Kings 2:16). That begs the

question, why did all these things happen the way they did? Could it be to verify and lend credence to a transfer of leadership from Elijah to Elisha?

Let's review some other significant events that happened during that time. Notice that it was common knowledge that Elijah was to be removed from being the head (leader) that day (II Kings 2:3 & 5). Obviously, Elijah was being retired and Elisha was to be the new leader. When Elijah's mantle dropped and was picked up by Elisha, it gave visual evidence to those nearby that the Holy Spirit of leadership had now been transferred to him.

One wonders why a letter should come from Elijah about ten years after he had been taken up. Perhaps it was because Elijah was the prophet of God when this present king's father was king, which would have lent more authority to the letter. Certainly, knowing about a letter that came long after Elijah was gone has benefited us by helping to clear up a mystery of what really happened to Elijah, and thus proving that we can still rely on God's absolutes.

We still don't know where he went, and probably won't know until we can ask him personally. However, these are things we do know. He did not go up to the heaven of the throne of God - for only Christ has ascended to that heaven. At some point, Elijah did die; Hebrews 11 says so. We know that God's word can be trusted; He does not change (Mal. 3:6). We know that God is true and His word is justifiable.

“For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged” (Rom. 3:3-4). We have judged between man’s traditions and God’s word and have found man to be wrong and God to be true, reliable and therefore justified.

**12. Paul said, “to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord,” therefore we are conscious and with the Lord at death** (II Cor. 5:8).

Did you notice? The verse has been misquoted as is often done. “And” was replaced by “is”, “Is” is present tense, “and” is time neutral. If you are sleeping the sleep of death, you have no consciousness. Certainly you are in God’s hands and protection. The next instant of your consciousness will be with the Lord, but until then you are not conscious and have no knowledge of the passing of time. Consider Absolutes 3, 5, & 6.

**13. God is not the God of the dead, but the living. Therefore, the dead are alive in heaven.**

Isolating a verse from its context can lead to many wrong conclusions.. In reading the whole context of Matthew 22:32 we find that the Sadducees, who did not believe in a resurrection, were trying to lay a trap for Jesus by setting up perceived complications in a resurrection. Jesus was plainly telling them that the lives of the righteous are reserved unto God in heaven, not that they were awake from their sleep and

fully conscious. God, who knows the end from the beginning, considers the future and his promises as though they already exist (Rom. 4:17). Compare Absolutes. 3 & 15 in study guide 1.

**14. The saints under the altar that cried out to God prove that the dead are in heaven and are fully conscious** (Rev. 6:10).

Much of Revelation was written in symbolic language, and one must look beyond the obvious. John was in the spirit and saw the future in a vision. We don't expect the horsemen of the first four seals to be literally riding through the earth at the time of the end? Why should we think the fifth seal should be literal? It is symbolic of the saints that have been, and are yet to be, killed. Remember that Abel's blood cried out *from the ground* when Cain killed him. His spirit wasn't conscious and in Heaven he was simply dead and in the ground as are all who have died and are awaiting the resurrection.

Jesus said, "... no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven ..." (John 3:13). "... let God be true, but every man a liar ..." (Rom 3:4). Why believe a man over the words of our Lord and savior Jesus?

The following true statement is not often heard nor taught from the pulpit.

**15. The dead are unconscious; the spirit (breath) of life has returned to God, their bodies have turned to dust; the next instant of their consciousness will be in the resurrection.**

This statement conflicts with none of God's absolutes. We are sealed with the promise unto the day of redemption (future), the purchase price has been paid, and our names have been written in God's book of life.

(Christ) "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, (future). Which is the earnest of our inheritance until (future) the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory" (Eph. 1:13-14).

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30).

"And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which labored with me in the gospel, whose names are in the book of life ..." (Phil. 4:3). 

James 1:5-8 tells us how to obtain true wisdom. Knowledge is not intelligence for even the ignorant can be taught knowledge; nor is intelligence wisdom; brilliant minds have often tendered ludicrous opinions and conclusions. Wisdom is granted by God to those who humbly and sincerely approach Him with singleness of purpose, a mind toward obedience and a thirst for the truth. As James wrote, God gives wisdom to those who ask. But, one must love, believe and act on the truth He sends, otherwise He will send you a great deception (II Thes. 2:8-10).

## Miscellaneous verses often used to support conscious life after death

None of the following verses say anything about being conscious after death, but are often used to support that concept. Consider what the following verses are saying, and particularly what they are not saying:

II Corinthians 5:8:

"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." *(Certainly this verse is true, and the assumption is that we will be conscious, but it does not say that).*

Philippians 1:23:

"For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." *(Of course it's better, the pains, frustrations and cares of this life are over, but that is not saying we are conscious and able to watch or be aware of the trials and tribulations of our loved ones on earth).*

Philippians 3:20-21:

"For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." Conversation is more accurately translated as citizenship as it is in many other versions. Certainly our citizenship is in heaven and our conversations are recorded. *("Then they that feared the LORD spake often*

*one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name" Mal. 3:16).*

21) "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." (But this doesn't say that the dead are awake).

Hebrews 9:27:

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (*if some went to heaven or hell at death why have a judgment at the resurrection? Rev. 20:12*).

John 5:24-25:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (*Their names are written in God's book of life and will be in the first resurrection, also, they are not subject to the condemnation of the second death, Phil. 4:3; Rev.20:6 & 21:27*).

25) "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." (*The spiritually dead of the world who are now being called by the Father. Some however, are not being called now, God knows the best time to call them, compare the specificity of John 6:44 & 65 to John 7:37-38 when all are being called*).

John 11:23-26:

"Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

24) Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

25) Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:" *(The Bible speaks of many who were dead that were raised to physical life, but there is no record of any of them saying they were in heaven while they were dead).*

26) "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" *(Christ is speaking of the second death (Rev. 20:14-15)).*

John 12:26:

"If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor." *(Jesus is speaking of His death and resurrection and the promise to His servants that follow Him in death and resurrection, John 12:23-28).*

Luke 15:24:

"For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry." *(The father knew his son was not physically dead. This verse has nothing to do with being conscious after death).*

I Timothy 5:6:

"But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" *(An apt description of the unchristian world).*

Colossians 3:3-4:

"For ye are dead, and your life is hid (*recorded in the book of life*) with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (*Not before*).

I Corinthians 6:14:

"And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power." (*At the resurrection*)

II Corinthians 4:14:

"Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." (*At His coming*).

II Corinthians 5:1:

"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. ("In my Father's house are many mansions ... I go to prepare a place for you" -- *which we will receive at the resurrection, John 14:2*).

Ephesians 2:1-2:

"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;" (*infused with God's Holy Spirit,*)  
2) "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world ..." (*But now you are in the light of God's spirit wherein we have life, John 17:21-23*).

Ephesians 2:5-7:

"Even when we were dead in sins, hath He quickened us together with Christ." (*The quickening spirit is Christ in you, the HOPE of glory*).

6) "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:" (*Our names are recorded in the book of life even though we are still alive here on earth*).

7) "That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." (*These verses are assuring us of God's promises that even while we yet live as mortals we are considered among those of heavenly places, but it does not say the dead are conscious*).

Acts 7:59-60:

"And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." (*The spirit [breath] of life goes back to the one who gave it*).

60) "And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep" (*The sleep of death, unconsciousness*).

Satan builds on his deceptions and they become like a great spider web of bewildering doctrines based on lies. The Bible plainly teaches that the dead are asleep and therefore unconscious and unaware of the passing of time or events. However, if you believe the dead are awake in heaven, hell or

purgatory you open a Pandora's Box of Satan's counterfeit doctrines. Some include:

A “hell” where the unsaved are right now suffering in an ever burning fire, unable to die, yet unable to escape the burning pain. Would a God of love do that? Satan would love to have us believe that. (See study guide UNDERSTANDING HELL).

A “purgatory” where a loved one is supposedly trapped in an in-between state of heaven and hell. A useful tool in giving widows and friends of the dead a guilty feeling if they don't pay a priest enough to bail them out. A great money maker for the priestly class; a robber of widows and orphans.

Consciousness after death: a playground for demons. This allows demons to pose as spiritual guides, angels from God, loved ones coming back from the dead, involvement in séances, fortune telling, near-death experiences (NDEs) etc. Understand; a demon knows your loved one and can convincingly imitate the one you lost. Perhaps even revealing things you never knew. You can bet they will appear very comforting and loving, but that is the bait and further contact with an imposter will ultimately lead to serious problems. The Bible speaks strongly against attempting to make any contact with the dead.

### **Problems in translating from the original languages**

Consider how often one word can be translated into a variety of words in English, and vice versa. As an example "sama" translated both as breath and as spirit:

In Geneses 2:7 we read: "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath (*spirit, sama, Strong's 5397*) of life; and man became a living soul." (Note, not "immortal" soul).

Then in Proverbs 20:27: "The spirit (*breath, sama, Strong's 5397*) of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly." (So, it is by the spirit/breath that reveals and records the character of man).

Or, consider the word "rauh", translated many times as either "spirit" or as "breath" (among other things as well):

In Ecclesiastes 12:7: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit (*breath, rauh, Strong's 7307*) shall return unto God who gave it."

Also in Job, Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite speaking in verse 33:4 says: "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath (*spirit, rauh, Strong's 7307*) of the Almighty hath given me life." (Might we say then, that the breath of life is the spirit of life that returned to God at death)?

Could we therefore conclude that the spirit of life is the breath of life that gives us physical life, yet not necessarily a conscious immortal spiritual being? And when that spirit/breath returns to God, the body returns to dust, but the imprint of that person's decisions and actions are held in reserve in heaven toward their future resurrection.

Wasn't Christ touching on this same concept of the two different life forms (mortal and immortal) when talking to Nicodemus in John 3:3-8?

### **The path to wisdom**

"I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies (scriptures) are my meditation" (Ps. 119:99).

Christ told Satan, "It is written; Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4).

"The grass withers, the flower fades: but the word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isa 40:8).

Checking cherished beliefs against all relevant scriptures prevents us from rendering His word ineffective (Mark 7:13) thereby giving us wisdom and proving that --

**HIS ABSOLUTES STAND!**