

A BIBLE PROPHECY ADVENTURE REVELATION SEMINARS

THE THIEF ON THE CROSS Luke 23:39-43

For years many have believed that when reading the KJV of Luke 23:43 that the thief went that day to be with Jesus in paradise. A closer look bears out the fact that neither the thief nor Jesus was in paradise that day and that a misplaced comma has caused this misunderstanding. When the comma is properly placed the passage reads — Verily I say unto thee today, thou shalt be with me in paradise.

Christ did not promise the thief that he would be with Him in paradise that day. He Himself did not go that day into paradise. He slept in the tomb, and in the morning of the resurrection He said, "I am not yet ascended to my Father." Jn. 20:17.

What Christ did say that day to the thief, on the day of crucifixion, on the day of apparent defeat and darkness, when all seemed lost, was "You will be with me in paradise." — The promise was given! The thief died with the assurance of eternal life like any other child of God, 1 Thess. 4:13-18, to be raised on that great resurrection morning.

In the original manuscripts of the scriptures, the Greek language was without punctuation. The comma in question and all other punctuation in the New Testament was put in hundreds of years after this was written by Dr. Luke.

The best way to clearly understand what Jesus meant that day when speaking to the thief is to answer some other questions:

1. What is paradise? (Lesson 8)
2. Did Jesus go to paradise on that day of His crucifixion? (Lesson 13)
3. What did Jesus teach about the time when men would enter upon their reward in paradise? (Lessons 6 & 7)

As our Saviour hung on the cross there came one gleam of comfort from His agony. It was the prayer of the penitent thief. From the heart of the thief comes hope mingled with anguish as he cries out, "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Quickly the answer came. Soft and melodious the tone, full of love, compassion, and power the words — Verily I say unto thee today, thou shalt be with me in paradise. This assurance is also ours today, as we make Jesus our Saviour and the Lord of our lives.

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What if someone handed you the phone and the voice at the other end was that of your mother who had died and was buried just six weeks ago? Would you believe it was your mother if you were positive that she had, indeed, died?

When a person dies, is he really dead? From the days of our forefathers we have said, "dead men tell no tales", but do they? Millions of people believe they are in touch with the dead. Government officials the world over, seek counsel from those who supposedly communicate with the dead.

Is this some gigantic hoax? Or is it one of the grandest blessings to ever come to man? Lives of people and the future of nations are at stake. Even more sobering, your own life and future could be in jeopardy. There is no defence for guess work when results can be so far reaching and final. We must obtain the facts.

Thank God, Jesus, the Star of the drama of Revelation, has the answers. He was dead, but is now alive forevermore. Every person ever raised from the dead has been raised by Him, and He will gloriously raise millions in the near future. He knows all the answers about death. In fact, He holds in His hand the keys of death.

Prepare for some surprises as we review His Word on this most important topic.

LIFE AND DEATH

1. Revelation 1:18 refers to Jesus as "He that Liveth, and was dead." What does he have in his hand?

Ans: "the _____ of _____ and _____".

NOTE: Thank God! Jesus has the keys, or answers, to the mysterious questions and problems regarding death. And since He, only, has the

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answers, we must go to His Word for information. No other source is reliable.

2. What is Jesus called in Revelation 1:5 ?

Ans: "The _____ begotten of the _____."

Note: Jesus was the first begotten from the dead in the same sense that He was "slain from the foundation of the world". He was also "first" from the standpoint of pre-eminence, or importance. His resurrection was "first" in the same sense that the president's wife is "first" lady.

3. Why is Jesus' resurrection so important to me as a person? 1 Corinthians 15:20-22

Ans: "Even so in _____ shall _____ be made _____."

NOTE: His resurrection is important to you and me because His resurrection has made all other resurrections possible.

4. How did God create man in the beginning? Genesis 2:7

Ans: He "_____ man of the _____ of the _____
and _____ into his _____ the _____
of _____".

5. What happens at death, according to the Scripture? Ecclesiastes 12:7

Ans: "Then shall the _____ to the
_____ as it was: and the _____ shall
_____ unto _____ who gave it".

NOTE Two things happen at death: the body returns to dust and the spirit returns to God.

6. What is this "spirit" which returns to God at death? James 2:26 (see margin).

Ans: _____

NOTE: See Exhibit #1, Point 1, "Spirit and Breath".

7. What happened when God placed the breath of [ifs in man's nostrils at creation? Genesis 2:7

Ans: "Man _____ a _____".

NOTE: God formed man of the dust and made a body. He then combined

SLEEP AND ETERNAL LIFE

Sleep

Sleep is a beautiful illustration of death. It is like going to bed at night, when we are tired, with assurance of waking in the morning. This takes the fear out of death for the Christian. They lie down to sleep — with the quiet assurance that Jesus will awaken them in the morning of the resurrection at His second coming.

Death is called "sleep" at least fifty times in the Bible. We are to regard it as a sound, dreamless sleep. A person may have been in the tomb 1000 years, but when raised at the resurrection it will seem to him that he merely dozed off for a moment. When angels meet God's resurrected saints at their gravesides, Matthew 24:31, it will be like a loving mother greeting her child after a brief nap.

Eternal Life

Man is not immortal. He is subject to death. But God's people do, indeed, have eternal life now. Eternal life is that miraculous, new, Jesus-filled life, which begins at conversion and will be continued in heaven. God's promise is that His faithful people, who now have eternal life, will not suffer the second death, Revelation 2:11, from which there is no resurrection. The first death, which all must die, does not remove the gift of eternal life. It only interrupts it while the saints sleep briefly. It continues in heaven after the resurrection.

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Death, Soul and Spirit

Death is not life in heaven, hell, limbo or purgatory. It is not life of any kind, anywhere. In death, the soul does not live, the spirit does not live. No shadowy substance of any kind lives. It is the exact opposite of life - death.

The words "soul" and "spirit" are used over 1600 times in the Bible, but not one time are either given any life or personality or wisdom or knowledge when separated from the body.

The word "soul" does have other basic meanings in the Bible. Usually it means a person or a living being, Genesis 2:7. But sometimes it means "life". Job 12:10. And sometimes it simply means the "mind" or "intellect". Psalm 139:14. In all cases, however, the definition is the same: body plus breath equals soul. And in all cases the soul does not exist when body and breath are separated. Many English words have several meanings, but, this is not confusing; the context usually clarifies which meaning is intended.

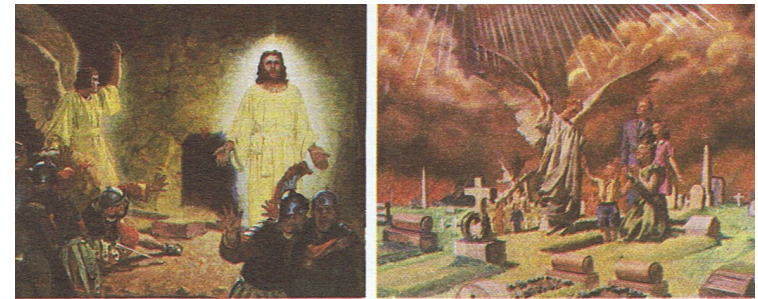
breath with this body and man BECAME a living soul. So the Bible definition for "soul" is **BODY PLUS BREATH = SOUL**. A living, breathing being IS A SOUL. The Bible, in this text, is saying that we ARE SOULS! The truth is we do not HAVE souls, but we ARE souls.

8. Be souls die? Ezekiel 18:4, 20

Ans: "The soul that sinneth it shall _____."

NOTE: Strangely, the Bible does not agree with the widely used term "undying soul". Rather, the Scripture teaches that the soul has a very short life.

Our hope is the resurrection.



9. At death, the body returns to dust, and the breath (spirit) returns to God. What happens to the soul? Where does it go? Psalm 104:29, 30

Ans: The soul goes nowhere. It simply _____ to exist.

NOTE: See Exhibit #1, Point 2, "Soul," and Exhibit #3, "Thief".

10. Jesus and Job both tell us where the bodies of the dead are. Where are they? Job 21:32; John 5:28, 29

Ans: _____

NOTE: They are not in heaven or hell, but rather in their graves. On the day of Pentecost, Peter said that David was in his grave and had not gone to heaven, Acts 2:29, 34. But the Scriptures clearly teach, Hebrews 11:32, that David will be saved in God's Kingdom. David is not yet in heaven because God's plan is that the dead wait in their graves until Jesus returns and resurrects them. Hebrews 11:39-40

11. Can dead people think? Psalm 146:4

Ans: _____

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SPIRIT, BREATH, SOUL

Spirit and Breath

Job 27:3 also points out that the "spirit" and the "breath" are the same. Job further states that this spirit or breath is in his nostrils. Please remember that it was the "breath" that God placed in Adam's nostrils at creation, Genesis 2:7. So the spirit that returns to God when a person dies is the breath of life. Keep in mind that the spirit, or breath, returns to God, at death, but not the disembodied soul. Never, in the Bible, is the disembodied soul said to return to God at death.

The word "breath", here, is not referring to one's common breathing, but breath as the "divine spark of life". It is this breath or "divine spark of life" that returns back to God at death. Only God has the power to create life and He retains that power exclusively.

Soul

At creation, two things combine to make a soul: body and breath. Until these two things combine, a soul does not exist. At death, these two things (body and breath) separate. The body returns to dust and the breath returns to God, and once again, the soul no longer exists. The soul goes nowhere at death. It simply ceases to be.

A simple illustration may help clarify this point. Suppose that combine lumber and nails and make a box: lumber plus nails equals box. Then suppose that I no longer want the box so I pull the nails, and put them in a pile, and stack the lumber in another place. What happens to the box? Where does it go? It goes nowhere. It simply ceases to be. The box is a combination of two things. There is no such thing as a box, unless lumber and nails are combined to make it. The nails and lumber still exist but there is no box until the two are joined together. So with the soul: the breath exists and the body returns to dust, but the soul does not exist unless the two are combined.

12. Do dead people know what their loved ones on earth are doing?
Job 14:12, 21

Ans: _____

NOTE: The following Scripture passages are also very specific Job 7:9, 10 — The dead can't go back and haunt their houses. Psalm 6:5 — The dead do not remember or give thanks. Isaiah 38:18, 19 — The dead can't learn truth. Psalm 115:17 — The dead do not praise the Lord.

13. In death, doesn't some part of man know something? Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10

Ans: "The _____ know not _____".

NOTE Words could not be coupled together in a sentence to be plainer, "the dead know not anything". The passage says the dead do not love, hate or envy. They have no wisdom or knowledge. They do not work and they are in no way involved with anything that is done under the sun. THEY CANNOT CONTACT THE LIVING. Before proceeding with lesson, read carefully Point 3, "Death, Soul, and Spirit", from Exhibit #1.

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RESURRECTION FROM DEATH

14. When will the righteous dead, who are now in their graves, be raised? I Corinthians 15:20, 23; I Thessalonians 4:15-17

Ans: At the coming of _____

15. Now did Jesus speak of death? John 11:11-14

Ans: "Our friend Lazarus _____."

NOTE: See Exhibit #2, Point 1.

16. Be people have Immortality new? I Timothy 8:15, 16

Ans: _____

NOTE: Man is mortal or subject to death, Job 4:17. God, only, has immortality.

17. When will Beds people receive immortality? I Corinthians 15:51-55

Ans: When they are _____ at Jesus' _____.

NOTE: Jesus will give immortality to His people as a free gift, when they are translated at His second coming Until then, no one but God has immortality. Immortality means not subject to death, Luke 20:35, 36. The concept of the

28. Read again the great passage of scripture on Jesus' return and the resurrection found in I Thessalonians 4:16-18. What does verse eighteen say these words should bring us?

Ans: "_____ one another with these words".

NOTE: The Bible emphasis is not on an immortal soul, winging its way to heaven at death, as many have thought. The scriptures do not focus on death as a means to go to heaven. Death is not a comfort. The focus of scripture is always on the second coming of Jesus and the resurrection. And the greatest emphasis is on the glad news of Christ's own resurrection, I Corinthians 15:12-26. Because He rose again, all who sleep in Him will rise again. What blessed comfort indeed!

29. What inconceivably great power is promised to God's people today? Philippians 3:10

Ans: "The _____ of His _____."

NOTE What a joy to be reunited with friends and loved ones who died believing in Jesus Christ Truly, the second coming of Jesus will be a grand and glorious event for those who love and serve Him. Praise God! He offers me the same miraculous power in life that raised Jesus from the dead How can a Christian fail with such fantastic power available? It is yours for the asking.

30. Will you accept Jesus' offer to give you this resurrection power for victory in your life today?

Ans: _____



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undying, immortal soul of man, so often spoken of at funerals today, is contrary to the Bible. Scripture cannot be found to support it because the Bible teaches just the opposite. It Is Satan's plan to nullify Jesus' wonderful promise to give immortality at the resurrection by claiming that men already have It.

18. Bed's people do not have Immortality now, bat, do they have eternal life? 1 John 5:12; John 8:54

Ans: _____

NOTE: See Exhibit #2, Point 2.



Jesus promises to raise our sleeping loved ones.

SATANS' HOAX ABOUT DEATH

19. What lie about death did Satan tell Eve In the Barden of Eden? Genesis 3:4

Ans: "_____ shall _____ surely _____."

NOTE: Contrary to God's word, Satan said that death is not a fact "You won't really die, if you disobey" is what he was saying to Eve.

20. Why does Satan want people to believe that the dead are alive and can be contacted? Revelation 16:14; 11 Thessalonians 29; Revelation 13:13, 14.

Ans: So his angels can pose as spirits of the _____ and _____ people.

NOTE: Satan wants people to believe that the dead can be contacted so he can send his angels to pose as the spirits of the dead, and thus deceive them. His masterful delusions will deceive all but the very elect, Matthew 24:24. Notice that these evil angels also deceive the "kings of the earth", Revelation 16:13, 14.

21. Fallen Christendom Is referred to as Babylon In Revelation. What does Sod say is lamely responsible for its fall? Revelation 18:2, 4, 5.

Ans: "Babylon is _____ ... is become the habitation of

_____ the hold of every foul _____."

NOTE: Christendom is failing because Satan has gained access to the churches through his falsehood that the dead are alive. In all too many cases, messages from Satan's emissaries, who pose as spirits of the dead, are welcomed as marvellous counsel to the churches from the redeemed in glory. This gives Satan full power to deceive, and he makes every contact count. No wonder the apostle Paul so solemnly warned against such deception in I Timothy 4:1, 2.

22. According to Revelation, these same evil angels, posing as spirits of the dead, approach the kings and leaders of earth. What is the result? Revelation 16:13, 14; Revelation 18:23.

Ans: (a) Revelation 18:23 "By thy _____ were _____ nations _____."

Ans: (b) Revelation 16:14 " _____ them to the _____ of that great _____ of _____ Almighty".

NOTE: These angels, claiming to be the spirits of the dead, will be the powers which will influence the rulers of the nations of the world and lead them into that final battle of Armageddon, which will end in their total destruction. Tragically, leaders of many nations today, consult with those who claim to receive messages from the dead before deciding any important issue. No wonder this planet is in such disarray. Satan, himself, is being given access to call the signals.

AN IMPORTANT TEST

23. From what sources, only, should I receive my information on the subject of death? Isaiah 8:19, 20

Ans: (a) "Should not a people seek unto their _____?"

Ans: (b) "If they speak not according to this _____ it is because there is no _____ in them".

NOTE: This passage plainly states that we must refuse to listen to those who claim to speak for the dead, and, instead, obtain our information from God's Word only. Messages, which supposedly come from dead loved ones, are never from these loved ones, but rather, from Satan. Sobering thought!

24. Revelation says those who obey God will enter His Kingdom. Who will be among those shut out? Revelation 22-15

Ans: For without are dogs, and _____ and whoremongers and

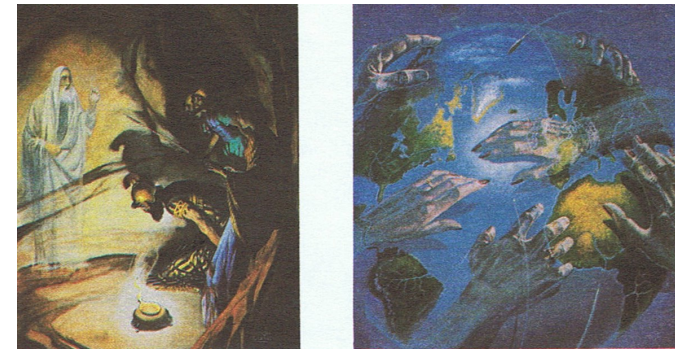
murderers and idolaters".

NOTE: Those who consult the dead (sorcerers) will be shut out of heaven. In Moses' day, God commanded that such be stoned, Leviticus 20:6; 20:27.

25. Witchcraft, which claims to contact the dead, is called, in the Bible, one of the works of the flesh for which people will be shut out of God's Kingdom. How should I relate to it? Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:11.

Ans: "Have no _____ with the unfruitful _____ of darkness, but rather _____ them".

NOTE: I should stay as far away as possible from anything that in any way resembles witchcraft. Presumed contact with the dead is virtually always contact with Satanic forces.



28. Why are the godly dead called blessed in Revelation 14:13?

Ans: "They may _____ from their _____."

NOTE: Notice the prophet does not say that they simply transferred their labours to heaven. No, their work is done. Ecclesiastes 9:10 also says clearly that the reason all work ceases at death is because there is no work in the grave where man goes at death. Man simply sleeps in the grave till the resurrection.

27. What finally happens to the terrible curse of death? Revelation 20:14

Ans: It is cast into the _____ of fire.

NOTE: Death ends in the fire. 'And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away,' Revelation 21:4 (1824).