

Series: Theological Treatises

The Death

A deep study about the nature of man and some key concepts such as death, soul, the breath of life, and mortality.



Federico Salvador Wadsworth





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1. General Introduction

The search for God’s knowledge and his purpose for man constitutes the most exciting of all the adventures that the human mind can propose. The challenge of finding in the Holy Book the golden thread of the plan of salvation will reward the scholar, who will be able to understand the majesty of the effort of the One who “**who did not spare His own Son**” (**Romans 8: 32**).

The set of Bible tracts, of which you have in your hands one of the studies, has been prepared to provide the lay member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church with the knowledge required to teach others about how to grow “**in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**” (**2 Peter 3: 18**) as well as for “**be ready always to give an answer to everyone who asks you a reason of the hope in you**” (**1 Peter 3: 15**).

The author is a regular member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church since 1977, a church elder since 1979, a husband, father, and grandfather, with the joy of having his entire family in “**the faith once delivered to the saints**” (**Jude 1: 3**) and a full subscriber to the 28 official doctrines of the church.



I reiterate that these tracts have been prepared for the church member, so he must graduate the dose of knowledge that he must transmit to those who are interested in knowing Jesus, whom the prophet calls the “**Desire of all nations**” (**Haggai 2: 7**).

That’s why, at the same time, we also wanted to include supplementary material to the Bible study that we hope will allow you to expand your current knowledge, as well as to be prepared to deepen on “**things the angels desire to look into**” (**1 Peter 1: 12**). Your ability to introduce these subthemes in harmony with the central concepts is key to the transfer of knowledge that you and I intend to pursue.

Since the knowledge of our God and His purposes will, by the work and grace of the Holy Spirit, always be in full swing, you will be able to find regular updates of each treatise (see the date yy.mm.dd that accompanies the name of the file). These updates, of course, will also correct some of the human flaws that may have gone unnoticed by the author. On the other hand, your well-meaning intention to help us improve these issues will always be welcome. These treatises were originally written in Spanish, my mother language, but translated to English by the author to reach more people, as the latter is considered

world-wide as the commercial and technical language.

2. Structure of the Theological Treatise

At the beginning of each treatise, we will present the general structure of the set of these using a numbered block diagram, called the General Treatise Map. This chart (shown on one of the following pages) will allow you to see where the tract you have in your hands fits concerning the other topics. To make it easier to locate, in addition to the numbering, it will be marked in a different color than the others. Collect the topics, update them, and arrange them in this sequence if you find it useful to your knowledge development.

The numbers in each block simultaneously establish the order of creation of these treatises and the logical dependence between them as well. The blocks from number 70 onwards represent, in turn, a set of special treatises. I have grouped them into 6 major themes:

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|--------------|
| a. | Comparative Religions | Series 70.nn |
| b. | Chronologies | Series 75.nn |
| c. | Gospel Harmonies | Series 80.nn |
| d. | Genealogies | Series 85.nn |
| e. | Bible biographies | Series 90.nn |

The reading of these topics will give you the frame of reference to understand the most thematic treatises. These other topics have their own structure that will be related to the one mentioned here.

After the diagram of the whole, you will find a block diagram of the study itself, called the Treatise Map, where you will be able to notice the following:

- Each block of the diagram indicates the reference verse(s) at the bottom and a short phrase that corresponds to the logic of its inclusion in the topic.
- You will notice that there are some blocks, with different colored verses, that refer to parables that help to understand the central theme.



- c. Other blocks, which do not contain verses, expose issues that you might touch on when presenting the study; issues that have historical, geographical, scientific, technical, and other backgrounds. You will find in this study some information that will help you expose these concepts.
- d. These two types of blocks are not necessarily included in all studies.
- e. The arrows indicate the logical sequence in which the author thinks these topics should be presented. The sequence is set from left to right and from top to bottom. However, your initiative and the knowledge about your listeners' needs may point you in a different direction. Let yourself be guided in prayer by the One who cannot err.

At the end of this graphic phase, you will find the study in detail, which will follow, as far as possible, the structure of the block diagram. Some complementary materials to the study will be included at the end. I recommend that you read them in advance to find the exact moment to include them in your presentation.

To the extent possible, I have presented the source of some of these topics so that you can extend your understanding by reviewing them. I do not pretend to know everything these sources deal with, so I encourage you to go deeper and tell me how to improve this content. I have included some images found on the Internet to make your reading more enjoyable, I hope you like them.

The written phase of the study will contain:

- a. Headings for the main subtopics.
- b. Bible quotes (in red).
- c. Quotations from the Spirit of Prophecy (in green).
- d. Quotations from books or articles by various authors, aimed at expanding your knowledge on the subject (in blue).
- e. Comments on the mentioned quotations; in some cases, these will be presented before the quotation, as an anticipation of the statement, while in others they will be placed after it as a confirmation of the concept being held (in black).
- f. Maps, chronograms, genealogies, and other diagrams where appropriate to the subject matter.
- g. Complementary material grouped in a section that helps to understand some of the aspects that could arise when dealing with the central theme with other people. Not all topics necessarily contain this material.

Unless otherwise indicated, the quotes from the Holy Bible are from the King James Modern Version, my favorite in English. Sometime I will include other versions to compare or expand the understanding of a text.

When you develop a Bible study on this subject with non-church people, I recommend that you use the section corresponding to the study (with the verses included in the block diagram) without presenting the statements of the Spirit of Prophecy. Discuss the accompanying materials as they come up in the exposition, as well as in the question and answer phase.

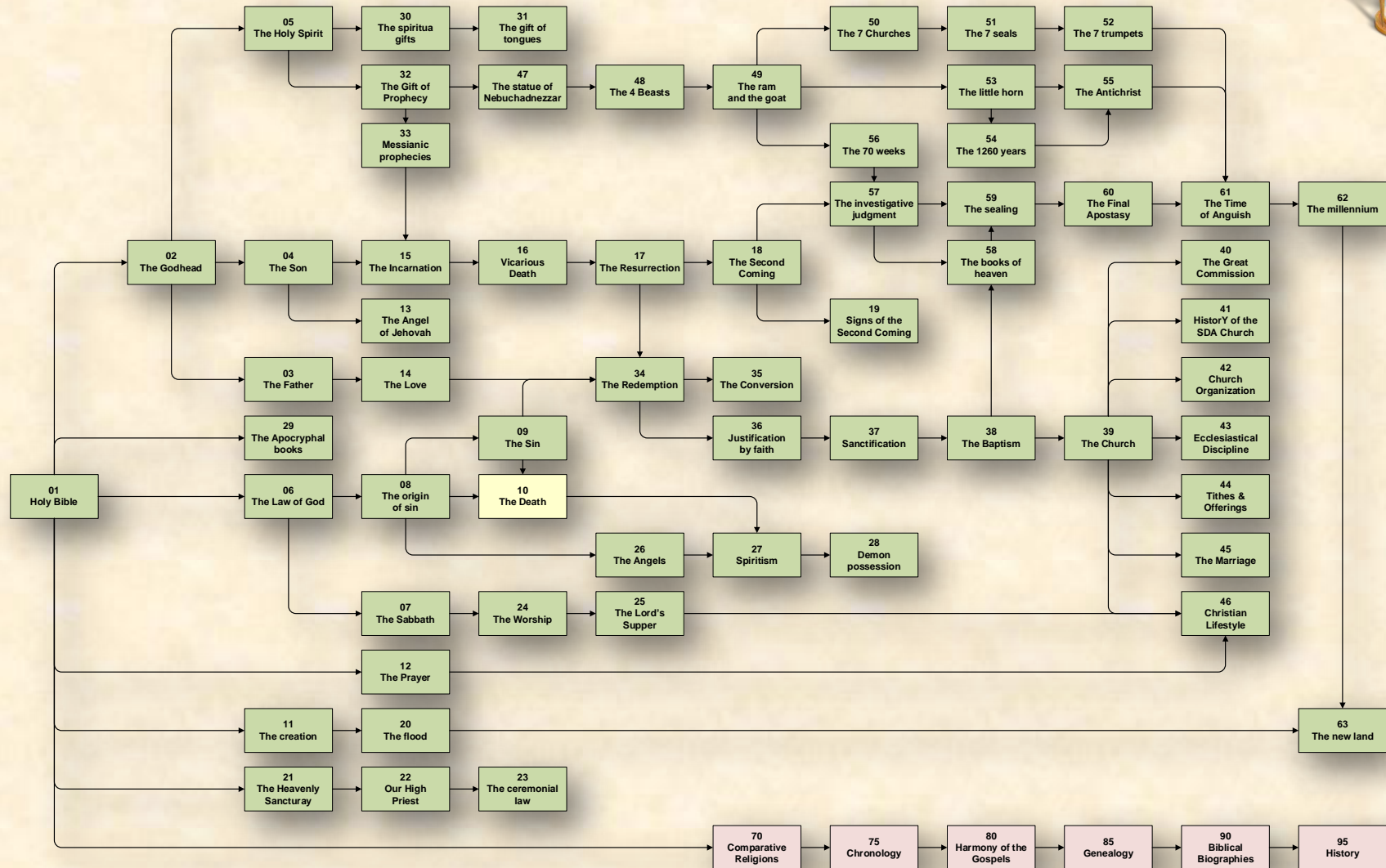
I have also prepared a file that includes all the block diagrams from the tracts so that they will be helpful to your memory when presenting the topic. I have also created a file with a copy of all the contents of the treatises so that you can review them without opening each of the documents, in case you are looking for a specific subtopic.

Allow me, as I have done so far, to address you personally during the study. I believe that this is how our Savior spoke to those He loved and wanted to save. Surely you will do the same with those who listen to you for this purpose.

This is a free material that has surely come to you from someone who appreciates you and wants you to know even more about Jesus and His wonderful plan of salvation. Spread the word in the same way, as you "have received freely, freely give" (Matthew 10: 8).

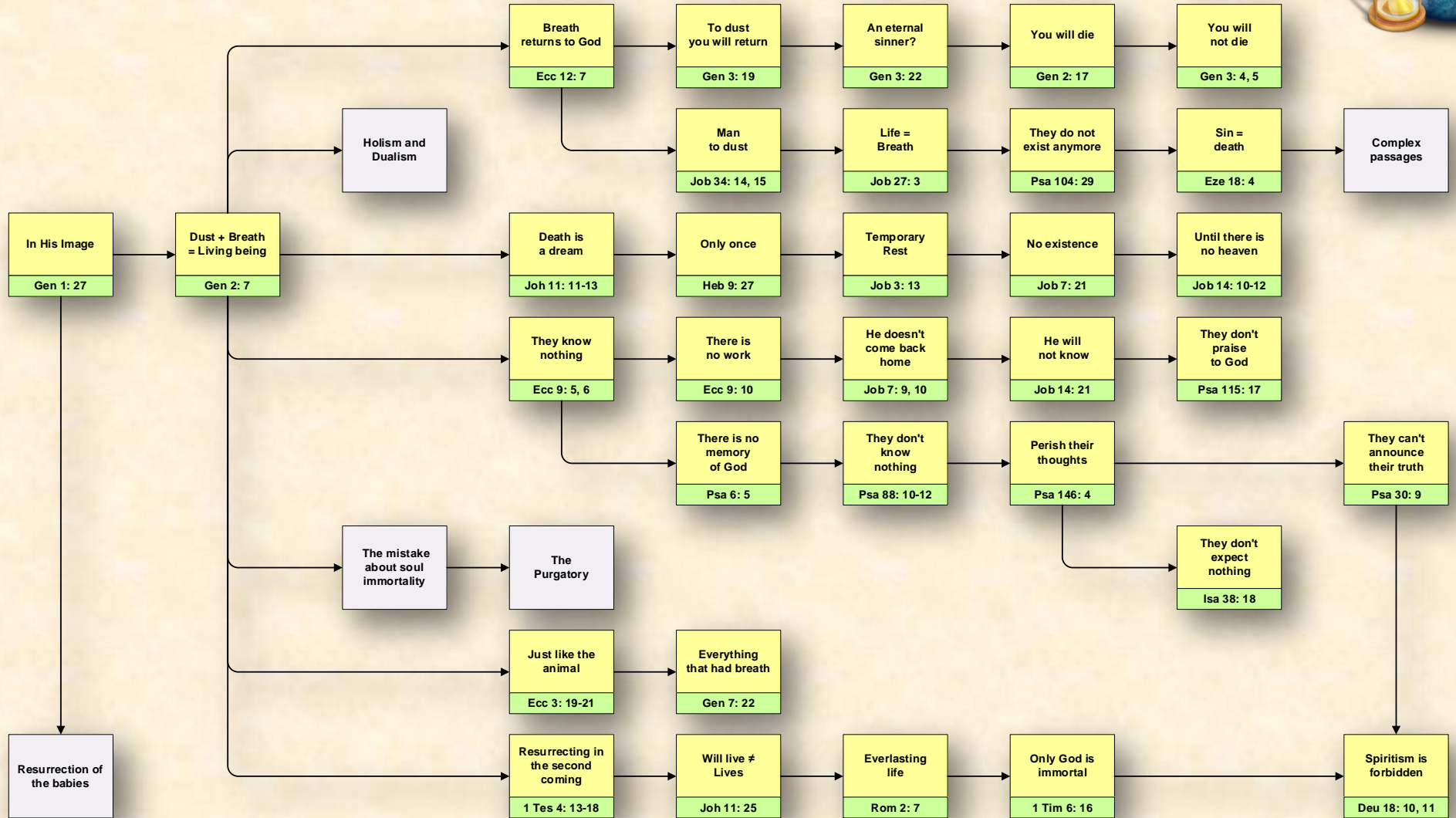


3. General Treatise Map





4. Treatise Map





5. Purpose of the Treatise

The purpose of the treatise is as follows:

- a. To present the nature of man, that is, how he was created.
- b. To establish the characteristics of death.
- c. Define concepts such as life, body, soul, spirit, and the like.
- d. Theologically relate both death and resurrection.
- e. To base the mortality of man.
- f. Treat the concept of conditional immortality.

6. Development of the theme

6.1. Introduction

There are two fundamental deceptions in which the enemy of God has brought down the majority of humanity. One is Sunday sacredness, which we have discussed in another study, the second is related to the nature of man: life and death.

While the pulpits of Christianity (as well as many other religions) repeat almost unanimously that man continues to live when he dies, God's Word presents an entirely different truth about death. This false teaching has led to a multitude of misconceptions: communication with the dead, spiritism... as well as other doctrines that arise from this misperception: the intercession of the saints, eternal hell, purgatory, among many others.

It is interesting to note how pagan thought penetrated a decadent Christianity of the first centuries and the opinions of the Greek philosophers (pagans, moreover) were more accepted than the clear Word of God that points out the nature of man and his condition in death.

Understanding this fundamental concept has caused many of us who were confused about the mystery of death, and who questioned a god (yes with a small letter) who was supposed to punish the immortal souls of his children for eternity, to now fully understand God's love and his purpose to give us eternal life if we are faithful.

6.2. The nature of man

The Word of God holds that God created us in his own image. This image has been blurred over time by sin, during which time our physical and intellectual abilities have been greatly diminished, especially our spirituality. However, we came out perfect from God's hands.

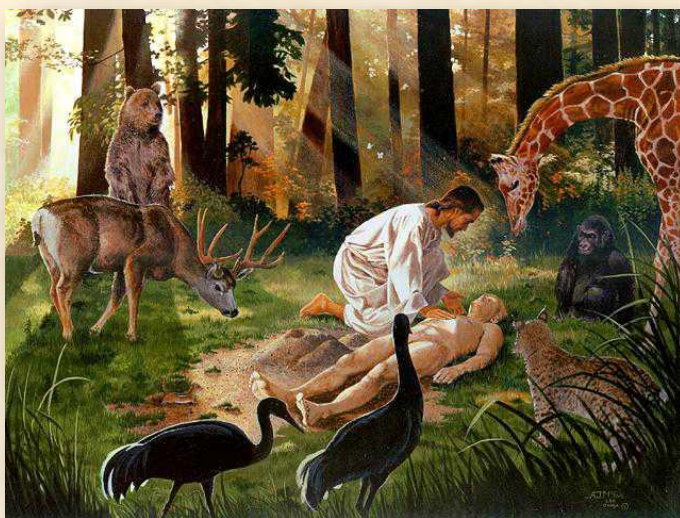
And God made the beasts of the earth after its kind, and cattle after their kind, and all creepers upon the earth after their kind. And God saw that it was good.

Genesis 1: 25

Man was to bear God's image, both in outward resemblance and in character. Christ alone is "the express image" (Hebrews 1: 3) of the Father; but man was formed in the likeness of God. His nature was in harmony with the will of God. His mind was capable of comprehending divine things. His affections were pure; his appetites and passions were under the control of reason. He was holy and happy in bearing the image of God and in perfect obedience to His will.

Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 45

After the earth was created, and the beasts upon it, the Father and Son carried out their purpose, which was designed before the fall of Satan, to make





man in their own image. They had wrought together in the creation of the earth and every living thing upon it. And now God said to His Son, "Let us make man in our image". As Adam came forth from the hand of his Creator he was of noble height and of beautiful symmetry. He was more than twice as tall as men now living upon the earth, and was well proportioned. His features were perfect and beautiful. His complexion was neither white nor sallow, but ruddy, glowing with the rich tint of health. Eve was not quite as tall as Adam. Her head reached a little above his shoulders. She, too, was noble, perfect in symmetry, and very beautiful.

This sinless pair wore no artificial garments. They were clothed with a covering of light and glory, such as the angels wear. While they lived in obedience to God, this circle of light enshrouded them. Although everything God had made was in the perfection of beauty, and there seemed nothing wanting upon the earth which God had created to make Adam and Eve happy, yet He manifested His great love to them by planting a garden especially for them. A portion of their time was to be occupied in the happy employment of dressing the garden, and a portion in receiving the visits of angels, listening to their instruction, and in happy meditation. Their labor was not wearisome but pleasant and invigorating. This beautiful garden was to be their home.

In this garden the Lord placed trees of every variety for usefulness and beauty. There were trees laden with luxuriant fruit, of rich fragrance, beautiful to the eye, and pleasant to the taste, designed of God to be food for the holy pair. There were the lovely vines which grew upright, laden with their burden of fruit, unlike anything man has seen since the fall. The fruit was very large and of different colors; some nearly black, some purple, red, pink, and light green. This beautiful and luxuriant growth of fruit upon the branches of the vine was called grapes. They did not trail upon the ground, although not supported by trellises, but the weight of the fruit bowed them down. It was the happy labor of Adam and Eve to form beautiful bowers from the branches of the vine and train them, forming dwellings of nature's beautiful, living trees and foliage, laden with fragrant fruit.

The earth was clothed with beautiful verdure, while myriads of fragrant flowers of every variety and hue sprang up in rich profusion around them. Everything was tastefully and gloriously arranged. In the midst of the garden stood the tree of life, the glory of which surpassed all other trees. Its fruit looked like apples of gold and silver, and was to perpetuate immortality. The leaves contained healing properties.

Ellen G. White, The Story of Redemption, 21, 22

In narrating the creation of man, Moses in the book of Genesis says that God formed him from "the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being" establishing precisely his nature.

Man is dust with the addition of a life force called the breath of life. The belief that the addition is a "soul", i.e. an eternal being (according to Catholic theology, which is also accepted by most Protestant or Evangelical churches) living in the body is not biblical. Its origin is not to be found in the pages of the Holy Book but in the obscure sources of paganism and philosophy, in the Greek thought that permeated the Christian church in the centuries immediately following the apostolic era (2nd century onwards).

And Jehovah 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: 7

Let's look at the keywords used in the original language (Hebrew):

1. dust (afár) is defined as: mud, earth, clay, ash, debris, mixture, dust.
2. breath (neshamá) puff, wind, fury or life-breath, divine inspiration, intellect, soul, spirit, breath, breathing, breath, life, living. Synonym of rúakj which means wind; by similarity breath, a sensitive or even violent exhalation.
3. soul (néfesh) creature that breathes, being, life.

While the words used by our Lord Jesus in the Greek of the New Testament are

1. sóma: is defined as the whole body.
2. pneúma: of airflow, breath (sopor) or breeze, spirit.
3. psujé; person, being, life, soul, spirit.

The life-giving process of creation involves the union of two lifeless materials in themselves, the dust of the earth, and the breath of God. It should be noted that God's breath produces life but does not consciously live by itself apart from the body (dust of the earth). Otherwise, man would have had a previous existence before creation and would not have needed the body to live, let alone the brain organ to think. It is curious to see that those who propose the immortality of the soul have not thought about how, for example, a person can receive a blow to the head and lose consciousness



even while preserving life, yet if that blow were stronger to the extent that the person lost his life, then he would receive a consciousness superior to the one he had when using the brain.

The State of the Dead, 3

If life is produced by the union of the dust of the earth (in the form God gave it) and the breath of life, (not as Michelangelo imagined it in his wonderful creation of the Sistine Chapel) death occurs when these two parts are separated.



The two parts do not remain separate, while the dust returns to the earth, because of the progressive degeneration of the lifeless bodies, the Word of God says that the spirit (breath of life) returns to God. Note that the statement does not hold that the spirit of the "good" returns to God and the spirit of others goes somewhere else. What it does say is that the spirit, regardless of how that person lived, returns to God. We can also infer that this spirit is not "a person" or an individual entity as held by those who drive the dualistic view of man.

then the dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.
Ecclesiastes 12: 7

This concept is very important. If we analyze the following verse, we will see that God tells Adam, after his sin, that he would return to the earth, he tells him that he is dust and that he will return to dust. Notice that it doesn't say that his body would go to the earth, or that his body would return to dust, it says that he would go there. It would be illogical, under the assumption of the denial of the existence of a soul that survives the body, for God to tell him that he would return to dust if his soul were to continue living or even in contact with God. It is not possible to sustain the existence of a soul that survives the body with these verses.

In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken. For dust you are, and to dust you shall return.

Genesis 3: 19

The same is held in the following verse. If God were to "gathers to Himself his spirit and his breath" then "man shall turn again to dust". I reiterate that it is man who returns to dust, not his body as some claim.

If He sets His heart on man, if He gathers to Himself his spirit and his breath, all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again to dust.

Job 34: 14, 15

When Job speaks of his existence, which seemed (at that moment of his health and life crisis) to be about to end, he compares the concept of soul to the breath of God. In fact, the term here translated as "soul" is "neshamá" which is translated as we said, as breath. Once again, Job knows that his existence ends when he loses the "breath of God".

As long as my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils,

Job 27: 3

The concept of existence is given while the breath remains. If the breath disappears, man ceases to be, that is, he ceases to exist. It would be very surprising if the Bible were to say that man ceases to be, if in reality, as some claim, his soul (which in this supposed reality they say is him) continues to live.

You hide Your face, they are troubled; You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.

Psalms 104: 29

Sin has introduced death into the world. The consequence of sin, death, catches up with us all because we are sinners. God says that "the soul that sins, it shall die", that is, we can safely say that the



soul dies. Actually, in this passage, the word translated as "soul" in all three cases is *néfesh*; properly speaking, "breathing creature". As in all the previous cases, the creature dies, stops breathing, ceases to be, ceases to exist, is no longer.

Behold, all souls are Mine. As the soul of the father, also the soul of the son, they are Mine. The soul that sins, it shall die.

Ezekiel 18: 4

Going back in time to the fall of our first parents in Eden, when man had already sinned; God commands the angels to guard the tree of life so that he does not eat from it and "live forever". It would be inconsistent for God to be concerned that he should not have access to the tree of life and that his body should live forever, while his soul was supposed to be immortal, as some suppose. The question is: if the soul is immortal and is really the man, what does it matter whether the body lives or not?

Here it is important to point out a concept. We believe (we do not suppose, we are sure) that God created man for life. God created him in such a way that if he ate permanently from the tree of life he would live forever. He created him with conditional immortality, as long as he was faithful and obeyed God's commandments. Therefore, when we are in the new earth, we will eat from the tree of life again. I promise you that we will study this in another treatise.

And Jehovah God said, Behold, the man has 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 forever,

Genesis 3: 22

Of course, when God says that if we sin, we will die, men translate that if we sin, we will continue to live. When God tells Adam not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil because he will die, men understand that even though Adam ate, he still lives in a disincarnate spirit. It is extraordinary the praise that has reached almost all of Christianity that repeats in almost every pulpit the opposite of what God says—that is, that the soul that sins dies.

but you shall not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. For in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.

Genesis 2: 17

The author of the first lie, Satan, sees how everyone echoes the falsehood, by repeating "you shall not die", the opposite of what the Scriptures emphatically maintain. The deception of the supposed immortality of the soul, that is, the survival of the soul in death, leads to a chain of theological errors that are increasingly difficult to explain based on Scripture. We will address this further in this study.

And the serpent said to the woman, you shall not surely die, for God knows that in the day you eat of it, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as God, knowing good and evil.

Genesis 3: 4, 5

6.3. The dream of death

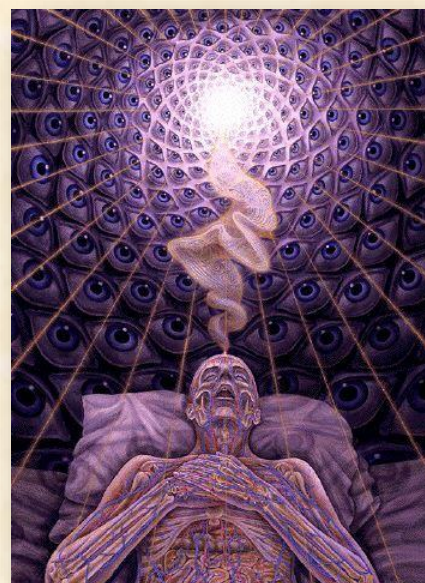
Unlike the survival of the soul to the body, which popular theology teaches, the Bible teaches about the sleep of death in a more than explicit way; it leaves no doubt to anyone who wants to do God's will and knows the truth.

Let us see the case in the resurrection of Lazarus. When they tell Jesus that their beloved friend is sick, the Master does not rush back. The sacred account says that he stayed two days where he was and then began the return, arriving when he was already four days dead. But first, when the disciples become interested in Lazarus, this interesting conversation arises:

He said these things; and after that He said to them, our friend Lazarus sleeps. But I go so that I may awaken him out of sleep. Then His disciples said, Lord, if he sleeps, he will get well. But Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He had spoken of taking rest in sleep.

John 11: 11-13

The concept is clear. When the disciples ask, Jesus knew that Lazarus had already died, which is confirmed in **John 11: 14**. The Bible compares death to sleep,





a state in which we lose the sense of what is happening around us, in which there is no control over our physical (voluntary) and intellectual capacities.

Since only God can wake us from this sleep of death, this indicates that man is "unconscious" not his body. It would not make sense for Jesus to speak of death as a dream if the soul were "awake", so to speak.

Paul affirms, on the other hand, that death is a unique event for men (of course, some few have been resurrected by divine intervention and have died again) but for the common mortal man, as we usually call ourselves correctly, it is a unique event. So, it does not make sense, for Christians I say, to believe in reincarnation, for example. It is surprising, however, to find many Christians who believe in this satanic deception of multiple living opportunities.

It is nice, to say the least, to think that if I fail in this opportunity of life, I have one and another and another opportunity until I get it right. Surely this way of thinking won't encourage people to be better... everyone would save it for the next one, including me, I don't know if you would too. The truth is that the Scripture says that men die once, that there is no more, that then the judgment... and of course, then the sentence, and of course, the execution of the sentence.

And as it is appointed to men once to die, but after this the judgment,

Hebrews 9: 27

Job says that if he died then he would rest. He also says he would "sleep" by using again the simile of sleep for death. How could death be rest for a person if he continued living through his soul, as popular preachers say? Imagine a father who died and left, for those situations that life has, his small children in the orphanage, without the capacity to cover their expenses, suffering hunger and cold, while he is placid (let's suppose, right?) in heaven according to the popular theory. It would be very difficult for him to find rest.

Notice that I say popular to this belief because it is sustained by the great majority of religions, not only Christian but above all the pagan ones, from where this belief has its origin, so rooted among the supposed Christians, of almost all denominations.

For now I should have lain still and been quiet; I should have slept. Then I would have been at rest

Job 3: 13

The same patriarch says "I shall sleep in the dust", conjugating the concept of the sleep of death and the return to the dust that we have already mentioned in the previous section. He also adds that if this were to happen, he would no longer exist. Of course, while he sleeps in the dust, he no longer exists, he is dead. But many people, very many, without having studied what God says, continue to believe that the dead... live. What a great contradiction!

And why do You not pardon my transgression, and take away my iniquity? For now I shall sleep in the dust, and You shall seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.

Job 7: 21

This dream will not be eternal. Job says that we will wake up, until "heavens are no more" when Christ returns for the second time to gather his people. But let us be clear, they will not wake up first, they are still in a dream, they are dead (or we will be) until Christ comes.

But man dies and is cut off; and man expires, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and a river falls away and dries up, so man lies down and does not rise. Till the heavens are no more, they shall not awake, nor be awakened out of their sleep.

Job 14: 10-12

Nowhere in the Sacred Scriptures is found the statement that the righteous go to their reward or the wicked to their punishment at death. The patriarchs and prophets have left no such assurance.





Christ and His apostles have given no hint of it. The Bible clearly teaches that the dead do not go immediately to heaven. They are represented as sleeping until the resurrection. **1 Thessalonians 4: 14; Job 14: 10-12**. In the very day when the silver cord is loosed and the golden bowl broken (**Ecclesiastes 12: 6**), man's thoughts perish. They that go down to the grave are in silence. They know no more of anything that is done under the sun. **Job 14: 21**. Blessed rest for the weary righteous! Time, be it long or short, is but a moment to them. They sleep; they are awakened by the trump of God to a glorious immortality. "For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible... 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". **1 Corinthians 15: 52-54**. As they are called forth from their deep slumber they begin to think just where they ceased. The last sensation was the pang of death; the last thought, that they were falling beneath the power of the grave. When they arise from the tomb, their first glad thought will be echoed in the triumphal shout: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Verse **55**.

Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, 549, 550

To the believer, death is but a small matter. Christ speaks of it as if it were of little moment. "If a man keeps my saying, he shall never see death", "he shall never taste of death". **John 8: 51, 52**. To the Christian, death is but a sleep, a moment of silence and darkness. The life is hid with Christ in God, and "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory". **Colossians 3: 4**.

He who Himself was soon to die upon the cross stood... a conqueror of the grave, and asserted His right and power to give eternal life.

Ellen G. White, The Faith I live by, 187

Well... sleep is a good simile to compare it with death, but it is not exactly that. I can have light sleep and wake up from a little noise (if it wasn't for my wife I wouldn't even wake up from the tremors), sleep can have partial intellectual activity. One of the positive things about this sleep of death is that, as we have read, it will seem to us just an instant from when we close our eyes to see our Savior coming for us. It will be like barely blinking, barely closing our eyes, and opening them so that we are never again deprived of life. We will see a greater precision about the characteristics of the sleep of death later on.

6.4. The state of the dead

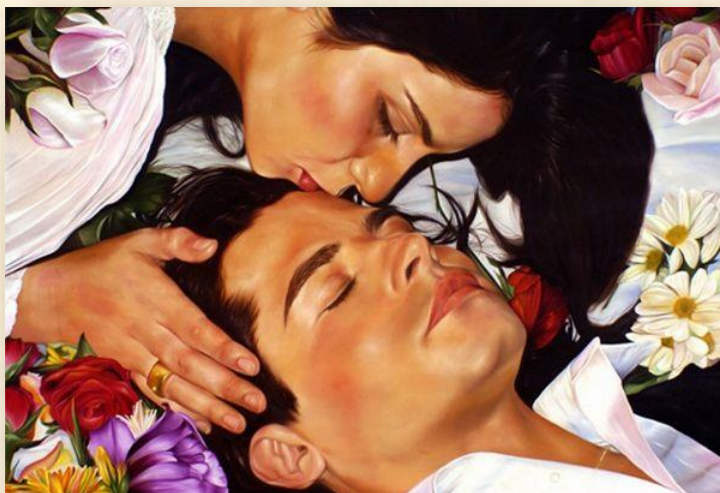
The truth is that during this sleep of death the state of unconsciousness is total. There is no more knowledge of what is happening around. I hear many times, especially at funerals, that the people who died are still with us; many think that their mother, father, or grandparents will watch over them from the beyond. While this may sound comforting, it is nothing more than a comforting lie. Let's see what the Bible says.

For the living know that they shall die; but the dead do not know anything, nor do they have any more a reward; for their memory is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; nor do they any longer have a part forever in all that is done under the sun.

Ecclesiastes 9: 5, 6

Some who learned of Lazarus' death and resurrection must have sought him out later to learn something of the realm of death. I can imagine if there had been journalists, like today, what they would have asked. They would have told him about the tunnel and the bright light at the end that those who have had those close encounters with death supposedly have and who say they "have returned". To their surprise, Lazarus had nothing to say.

The feast at Simon's house brought many of the Jews together; for they knew Christ was there. And they came not only to see Jesus, but Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. The





raising of Lazarus was the crowning miracle of Christ's life. The last test had been given to the Jewish nation. Lazarus had been raised from the dead to bear a testimony for Christ.

Many thought that Lazarus would have some wonderful experience to relate. They were surprised when he told them nothing. But Lazarus had nothing to tell. The pen of Inspiration has given light upon this subject. "The dead know not anything. ...Their love, and their hatred, ...is now perished" (**Ecclesiastes 9: 5, 6**).

But Lazarus had a wonderful testimony to bear in regard to the work of Christ. He was a living testimonial of divine power. With assurance and power, he declared that Christ was the Son of God, and asked the people what they would gain by putting Christ to death.

Ellen G. White, This Day with God, 149

These passages clearly say "the dead do not know anything", which implies the non-existence of any mental activity, which could not be said in the case of the existence of the soul that supposedly retains all capacities after death, of course, the latter, according to those who defend the false doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

They also point out that they "have any more a reward", so any activity that the living can do in supposed favor of the dead is useless. This would remove completely the alleged effectiveness of prayers or masses for the dead, prayers for souls in purgatory, or similar matters appearing in Catholic theology. Also, he mentions that they have no memory of things, cannot love, hate, or feel any of the emotions of the living. Besides, he says that "they any longer have a part forever in all that is done under the sun", so they cannot intervene in favor of their loved ones, as the great majority of persons assume. A single verse demolishes all the theological construction made by those who, knowing it or not, repeat the old lie of Eden: "You shall not die".

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no work, nor plan, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave where you go.

Ecclesiastes 9: 10

Solomon also points out that there is no activity in death, neither intellectual nor physical, nothing can be done, nor is there any wisdom. The following question of the psalmist destroys another false conclusion of the defenders of the dualistic theory. It is supposed that the soul of a good person would go to heaven, with God, where it would participate in the praise of God performed by angels and unfallen beings. But the psalmist says that in the grave there is no memory of God, that those who descend to Sheol (from Hebrew Sheol, the place of the dead, the place that is not satiated, the grave, the abyss) cannot praise Him. The conclusion is simple: not only do they not know what is happening in the world, but also about God, that is, they know nothing, that is, they are in total ignorance (ignoring something that others know, not having been aware of it). These statements are so categorical in denying popular theory that they seem to be no longer needed. But there is more...

For in death there is no memory of You; in the grave who shall give You thanks?

Psalms 6: 5

Another statement from the Book of Job defining the state of the dead is presented below. It says that he who goes down to the grave "shall come up no more", that is, there is no way back. He cannot return to his home, nor to the places he frequented. You have surely heard that the dead "retrace their steps" or that they have a time in which they dwell among us (the theories are infinite, some with an impressive degree of absurdity, but people believe them as if they were a divine revelation). For the verse quoted below demolishes all this.

As the cloud falls and vanishes away, so he who goes down to the grave shall come up no more. He shall return no more to his house, nor shall his place know him any more.

Job 7: 9, 10

There is no recognition of God in the grave, there is no praise, the dead cannot speak (either to each other or to others) about God's mercy or truth, or about His justice. The psalmist calls it the "land of forgetfulness". See that these passages tremendously disrupt the pagan theories on which false teachers rely to teach the survival of the soul or life after death.

For will You do wonders to the dead? Shall the dead rise and praise You? Selah. Shall Your loving-kindness be declared in the grave? Or Your faithfulness in ruin? Shall Your wonders be known in the dark, and Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

Psalms 88: 10-12

Even those closest to the deceased, like his children, for example, become a matter over which he has no interference. They cannot care for us, advise us, influence us, or attract any portion of luck, gift, or



benefit. They cannot intervene in the world of the living. But... and the apparitions, ghosts, etc... well, they are not our dead. Well... this is the subject of another treatise. Only I advance him that they are the demons...

His sons come to honor, and he knows it not; they fall, but he does not mark it.

Job 14: 21

When a man dies, when "his breath goes forth" at that moment "his thoughts perish". The brain activity stops, our body quickly decays because the human being has stopped being, he does not exist anymore. There is no way to make compatible these texts and the survival of an immortal soul. Read the following texts that abound on this subject. What is the common factor in all of them? Non-existence, the silence of the dead, lack of benefit from death, sense of not having any more hope than that which their life has assured them.

His breath goes forth; he returns to the earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

Psalms 146: 4

The dead do not praise Jehovah, nor do any who go down into silence.

Psalms 115: 17

What profit is in my blood, in going down to the pit? Shall the dust praise You? Shall it tell of Your truth?

Psalms 30: 9

One thing is especially clear in this last verse. Death has no benefit. Some people, when they say the body is a container of the soul, which retains it, end up thinking that death that "liberates" the soul from the body would come to be a blessing. This is a Greek, pagan conception. On the contrary, the Bible says that death is an intruder, an enemy infiltrated in God's plan, which will disappear sometime and forever. Many people have found in that false doctrine an impulse to end a miserable existence by thinking that a liberated soul would reach a joy denied by the body. There is no hope for him who descends to the sepulcher not having hidden his life in Christ Jesus. What many sometimes say about someone who died that "he has passed to a better existence" is false. He may have hope for a better life, but when "there is a heaven" if he has been faithful.

For the grave cannot praise You, death can not rejoice in You; they who go down into the pit cannot hope for Your truth.

Isaiah 38: 18

6.5. Difference between man and animals

Generally accepted theology assumes that when a man dies, he goes on living. It assumes that man possesses a soul that survives him after his transit through death. The same thought considers that the event of death is different in man than in animals, by supposing that man possesses a soul that animals do not have. This sounds logical and seemingly would resist an intelligent evaluation.



Of course, the Bible says exactly the opposite, that is, that death is an identical event for man and the animal. Solomon in the book of Ecclesiastes states the following:

For that which happens to the sons of men also happens to beasts, even one thing happens to them. As this one dies, so that one dies; yea, they all have one breath; so that a man has no advantage over a beast; for all is vanity. All go to one place; all are of the dust, and all return to dust again. Who knows the spirit of man that goes upward, and the spirit of the beast that goes downward?

Ecclesiastes 3: 19-21

The statement is strict and is not contradicted by any other statement of Scripture, as is to be expected for each verse. It is clearly stated that "as this one dies, so that one dies". I want to stop here and expand a little bit. This speaks of the process of death: the separation of matter from the breath of life. The verse says that the process is the same, that is, the "how" is the same: that is, the separation of the parts.



There is no difference either between the things that are separated into one and the other. The material part that remains of man, which corrupts itself and returns to the earth, is like that of the animal, equal to the breath of life. This statement removes the concept of an imperishable soul in man and its absence in the animal.

The second part of the quote is that both have the "one breath". The word used here is "rúakj" the same one we have dealt with when speaking of the nature of man. That is, the breath of life that we say the man has is exactly the same as that possessed by the animal. In addition, the verse says that "man has no advantage over a beast" which confirms what we are mentioning.

It is also affirmed, concerning these parts that are divided into death, that all "go to one place" which is not that there are differences, not even minimal, between the event of the man and the beast. This idea, which differs from that transmitted by human wisdom, may be painful for some; but if we understand this matter well we will see that it is not the breath of life (the software, so to speak) that distinguishes man from the beast but the material part (the hardware, to use the modern terminology). That is to say, a coffee maker is not the same as a computer, both work with electrical energy, but the design is evidently different.

The quote ends with a question that actually states that the spirit (also translated from the word rúakj) of both goes to the same place, which we mentioned before, God. Replace in the last part of the quote the word breath instead of spirit and you will see that there is no logic in assuming that the two are different.

all who breathed the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died.

Genesis 7: 22

When the flood occurs and men and beasts perish the biblical statement says that everything (men and beasts) "that had neshamá of rúakj of life in their noses". It uses almost two synonymous words to say that everything that breathed or had a breath died. There is no difference between man and beast.

6.6. The opportunity of resurrection

Death is an enemy that takes over our loved ones, that tears family apart, that prevents us from enjoying those we love the longest. This enemy deprives us of what we most desire: life. However, it is an enemy that will be defeated. Although we will touch on the subject of the resurrection in another treatise, we will focus on the opportunity of the resurrection. The Bible holds that the resurrection of the saints will occur when Jesus returns a second time, when he comes to end this whole system of things when he comes to put an end to pain and death, so that there will be no more separation between those who love each other, to change everything into eternal bliss. Come, Lord Jesus, please come!



But I would not have you ignorant, brothers, concerning those who are asleep, that you be not grieved, even as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will also bring with Him all those who have fallen asleep through Jesus. For we say this to you by the Word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord shall not go before those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And so we shall ever be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18

God does not want us to ignore "concerning those who are asleep" (reiterating once again the comparison between death and sleep) so that we do not grieve "even as others who have no hope". When I had very little time attending the Adventist church, I was not yet baptized if I remember correctly, a young



man of about 20 years old (a little younger than me at that time) died as a victim of leukemia. You will understand that it was a terrible shock to his family, his parents, and his older sister and younger brother. When we attended the funeral there were many wet or watery eyes; the highlight came when the coffin was going to be introduced into the niche, suddenly I heard someone start singing a hymn of hope, then all the people joined in. I was surprised, I said, "What kind of people are these who sing during a funeral?" My surprise was greater when I realized that the one who had begun to sing was the boy's father. Today I understand, at that moment I don't. Death for the Christian is a temporary separation, if we have both been faithful, we will see each other when the Lord comes and we will never be separated again. It was logical to sing!

This passage also states that those of us who are alive "shall not go before those who are asleep" who will go together to meet the Lord. It reiterates that "the dead in Christ shall rise first" and will join the faithful who are alive when He comes. Those who teach that the dead are living in heaven with God cannot explain how Paul says here that they will rise. Why would they rise if they are already alive now? It would be strange for God to call them to life when they are already alive, to call them to join Him when they have been with Him for God knows when.

The part I like best is that "we shall ever be with the Lord". So, because this is hopeful, we are told to encourage "one another with these words".

We have seen by the scriptures just given that when the Son of man comes, the dead are raised incorruptible and the living are changed. By this great change they are prepared to receive the kingdom; for Paul says: "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption". **1 Corinthians 15: 50**. Man in his present state is mortal, corruptible; but the kingdom of God will be incorruptible, enduring forever. Therefore, man in his present state cannot enter into the kingdom of God. But when Jesus comes, He confers immortality upon His people; and then He calls them to inherit the kingdom of which they have hitherto been only heirs.

Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, 322, 323

Jesus said to her, I am the Resurrection and the Life! He who believes in Me, though he die, yet he shall live.

John 11: 25

When Jesus was about to raise Lazarus, he told Martha that her brother would come back to life. Notice that He tells her that "though he die, yet he shall live"; he does not tell her that he lives, but that he "shall live". Let me analyze something. Lazarus had been a faithful follower of Jesus up to that time (and continued to be so) and therefore according to popular theology he should be enjoying God in heaven. Would you find logical (according to that line of thought) that Jesus should return him to this hard, sad and dangerous world and return him not to life, but to live in this world. The illogicality of dualistic thinking is evident.

indeed to those who with patience in good work are seeking for glory, and honor, and incorruptibility, everlasting life.

Romans 2: 7

What God offers us is something we do not possess, eternal life. Man is a mortal being, who needed even in his unfallen state from the tree of life to continue living.

Let us remember that when we are living on the new earth we will continue to eat from the tree of life for eternity. Because only God possesses immortality. We can live eternally (forever to be exact, that is, last forever) as a gift from God.

who alone has immortality, dwelling in light which cannot be approached, whom no one of men have seen, nor can see; to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen.

1 Timothy 6: 16

The fruit of the tree of life in the Garden of Eden possessed supernatural virtue. To eat of it was to live forever. Its fruit was the antidote of death... After the





entrance of sin, the heavenly Husbandman transplanted the tree of life to the Paradise above.

The redeemed saints, who have loved God and kept His commandments here, will enter in through the gates of the city, and have right to the tree of life. They will eat freely of it as our first parents did before their fall. The leaves of that immortal widespread tree will be for the healing of the nations. All their woes will then be gone. Sickness, sorrow, and death they will never again feel, for the leaves of the tree of life have healed them. Jesus will then see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied, when the redeemed, who have been subject to sorrow, toil, and afflictions, who have groaned beneath the curse, are gathered up around that tree of life to eat of its immortal fruit, that our first parents forfeited all right to, by breaking God's commands. There will be no danger of their ever losing right to the tree of life again, for he that tempted our first parents to sin will be destroyed by the second death.

Ellen G. White, Maranatha, 325

Just one last reference. The erroneous doctrine of the survival of the soul is the basis for the existence of ancient and modern spiritualism, with its pseudo-scientific theories included, such as para-psychology. God has forbidden contact with the world of darkness, obviously because the contact is not, unquestionably, with the dead but with demons. This will be the subject of a more extensive treatise.

There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that uses divination, an observer of clouds, or a fortune-teller, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or one who calls to the dead.

Deuteronomy 18: 10, 11

7. Complementary material

7.1. The holistic and dualistic concepts

The Greek conception of dualism, based on the existence of a body and a soul surviving without it, a conception based on pagan sources, has penetrated Christianity and even affected entirely the doctrine about the nature of man. There is no way to make compatible biblical teachings with dualism.

Holism (from the Greek *holos* meaning everything, whole, total) teaches us that the soul is inextricably united with the body. There is no life (being or soul) outside the body. On the other hand, the dualism whose maximum exponents have been Plato, Saint Augustine of Hippo and Descartes, implies that the life or soul (*néfesh*) can continue to exist in a conscious way outside the body. Some arguments that bring down the dualism are



- We would not need the brain, which is part of the body, to think and remain conscious.
- If the wages of sin is death and the soul is immortal, then the fall in Eden was of the body only. We cannot say that the body sins but the soul does not.
- If in Eden the fall of the body only occurs, then we should baptize only bodies and not souls. You cannot baptize the body without the soul or vice versa.
- If the soul already has immortality then what was lost was the body and we should not speak of winning souls for eternal life, but rather of winning bodies which are those that die.
- If all bodies that have existed have died and decomposed, then why baptize bodies?
- The soul that sins will die.

Gulley presents the holistic concept as follows: "It is not a soul in a body; it is a person with a body or a body that is a person".

The State of the Dead, 6, 7 (translated by the author)

The quotation presented is very clear to demonstrate the illogicality of the dualistic concept. The first aspect that denies the theory that the body is only a container of the soul is the brain's functioning and



thinking processes. If the soul continues to live away from the body, its functioning should be independent of the state of the body, which we note does not occur. When the body declines due to illness or old age, the supposed capacities of the soul also descend, implying that they depend on the body. Therefore, intellectual capacities die when the body dies. There is no survival of capacities.

Despite the obvious error of dualistic thinking, which depends only on human wisdom and cannot be sustained by the Scriptures, this is the basis for the false doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

7.2. The effect of believing in the supposed immortality of the soul

If we consider correct the false hypothesis that the soul is immortal, then:

- The destiny of the soul of the good should be different from that of the soul of the bad.
- Consequently, it is required to establish the existence of heaven and hell, or whatever you want to call them, but both eternal as the soul.
- If the soul lives after death, then we can communicate with it, creating the basis for spiritualism or communication with the dead.
- If there is communication, then the souls of those who love us could intermeditate in our favor, which establishes the theoretical platform for the intercession of the saints and the Virgin Mary.
- The assumption that the souls of the good may have a different burden of sin in their lives, which must be atoned for (for those who hold this, the atonement of the blood of Jesus is not enough) points to the necessity of purgatory and the potential influence of the living in bringing them out of it, this creates the masses for the dead and prayers for the dead or souls in purgatory, and indulgences (which are not things of the past as some people believe, they exist today).
- Concern for children who die without having made a profession of faith has determined the existence of the doctrine of limbo, a place that is neither heaven nor hell nor purgatory.
- If souls are immortal then, if there is eternal joy, there must be eternal torment.
- Therefore, evil is perennial and increases, while Satan has his own eternal kingdom of darkness.



Upon the fundamental error of natural immortality rests the doctrine of consciousness in death—a doctrine, like eternal torment, opposed to the teachings of the Scriptures, to the dictates of reason, and to our feelings of humanity... What say the Scriptures concerning these things? David declares that man is not conscious in death. "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish". **Psalm 146: 4...**

When, in answer to his prayer, Hezekiah's life was prolonged fifteen years, the grateful king rendered to God a tribute of praise for His great mercy. In this song, he tells the reason why he thus rejoices: "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". **Isaiah 38: 18, 19.** Popular theology represents the righteous dead as in heaven, entered into bliss, and praising God with an immortal tongue; but Hezekiah could see no such glorious prospect in death...

Ellen G. White, The Faith I live by, 174

In a special way, the concept of eternal torment is the one that most upsets our feelings and intellects. I confess that while I was Catholic it was the most difficult aspect to accept. I did not understand how a loving God (as I also know today that God is, but with much more argument) could punish his creatures, for a life



of about 70 years, for eternity, to terrible sufferings while the weight of their evil increases ad infinitum by the curses that they would surely pronounce in the face of these endless sufferings.

The damage that this concept has created in the image of God is enormous. Many have refused to believe in a God who would be capable of this infinite punishment. Those who continue to defend this horrible doctrine today probably transfer to the character of God their concepts of justice and mercy which are so different from those we know, from Scripture, that God has.

How repugnant to every emotion of love and mercy, and even to our sense of justice, is the doctrine that the wicked dead are tormented with fire and brimstone in an eternally burning hell; that for the sins of a brief earthly life they are to suffer torture as long as God shall live. Yet this doctrine has been widely taught and is still embodied in many of the creeds of Christendom. Said a learned doctor of divinity: "The sight of hell torments will exalt the happiness of the saints forever. When they see others who are of the same nature and born under the same circumstances,



plunged in such misery, and they so distinguished, it will make them sensible of how happy they are". Another used these words: "While the decree of reprobation is eternally executing on the vessels of wrath, the smoke of their torment will be eternally ascending in view of the vessels of mercy, who, instead of taking the part of these miserable objects, will say, Amen, Alleluia! praise ye the Lord!"

Where, in the pages of God's word, is such teaching to be found? Will the redeemed in heaven be lost to all emotions of pity and compassion, and even to feelings of common humanity? Are these to be exchanged for the indifference of the stoic or the cruelty of the savage? No, no; such is not the teaching of the Book of God. Those who present the views expressed in the quotations given above may be learned and even honest men, but they are deluded by the sophistry of Satan. He leads them to misconstrue strong expressions of Scripture, giving to the language the coloring of bitterness and malignity which pertains to himself, but not to our Creator. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" **Ezekiel 33: 11.**

What would be gained to God should we admit that He delights in witnessing unceasing tortures; that He is regaled with the groans and shrieks and imprecations of the suffering creatures whom He holds in the flames of hell? Can these horrid sounds be music in the ear of Infinite Love? It is urged that the infliction of endless misery upon the wicked would show God's hatred of sin as an evil which is ruinous to the peace and order of the universe. Oh, dreadful blasphemy! As if God's hatred of sin is the reason why it is perpetuated. For, according to the teachings of these theologians, continued torture without hope of mercy maddens its wretched victims, and as they pour out their rage in curses and blasphemy, they are forever augmenting their load of guilt. God's glory is not enhanced by thus perpetuating continually increasing sin through ceaseless ages.

It is beyond the power of the human mind to estimate the evil which has been wrought by the heresy of eternal torment. The religion of the Bible, full of love and goodness, and abounding in compassion, is darkened by superstition and clothed with terror. When we consider in what false colors Satan has painted the character of God, can we wonder that our merciful Creator is feared, dreaded, and even hated? The appalling views of God which have spread over the world from the teachings of the pulpit have made thousands, yes, millions, of skeptics and infidels.

Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, 535, 536

7.3. Purgatory

A Catholic concept that confuses people who seek Christ as their personal Savior is the subject of Purgatory. According to this doctrine, extracted as we shall see from paganism and not from Christianity,



Christ's sacrifice for us is not enough and the poor "souls" must atone for their sins in a place of temporary torment until they are "sufficiently" purified to dwell with God. This model of salvation affronts God by declaring that the perfect sacrifice of Jesus on the cross is insufficient and that we must somehow make up for or complete what is lacking.

Evidently, purgatory was a pagan idea. Virgil, a pagan Latin poet who lived from 70-19 BC, in his writings separated the souls of the dead in three different places: one for the good, one for the condemned, and a third where those who were not so bad could pay for their sins. Since the idea of purgatory existed outside the church before it was introduced into the church, it was likely included through contact with pagans like Virgil. In the church, there was a great intrusion of unbiblical ideas around 300 AD, when the Roman Emperor Constantine accepted many pagans as members of the church.

Thomas F. Heinze, Answers to My Catholic Friends, 34 (translated by the author)

Let me quote from a Baptist article that addresses the issue and accurately defines the Catholic understanding of Purgatory:

The first thing that comes to mind when trying to explain it is to answer this question with a "who knows?", but let the Catholic Church itself define it for us:

"There is purgatory, that is, a state in which the souls of those who died in God's grace with the reato [obligation that remains to the punishment corresponding to the sin, even after forgiveness] of some temporal punishment due for their sins, are entirely purified before entering heaven. (Theology of Salvation, by Antonio Royo Marin. Madrid: Editorial Católica, Biblioteca de Autores Católicos, 1956, p. 402)

"Since the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Spirit, following the sacred writings of the ancient tradition of the Fathers, has taught at the sacred councils, and very recently at this ecumenical council, that there is purgatory, and that the souls detained there can be helped by the suffrages of the faithful, and mainly, by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar, the Holy Council commands all Bishops to strive diligently so that the sound doctrine of Purgatory, transmitted by the Fathers and the Holy Councils, may be believed and maintained by the faithful of Christ, and taught everywhere and preached. The more subtle matters, and those which do not contribute to edification and for which there is, in most cases, no increase in piety, should be excluded from popular instruction for illiterate people. (The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent. Tan Books and Publishers, Inc. Rockford, IL; Imprimatur 1941, Session XXV, December 1563, page 214) "The Second Vatican Council, in the dogmatic constitution Lumen Gentium c.7 n.49, in describing the ecclesial reality in all its breadth, places purgatory as one of the three ecclesial states: some of its disciples go on pilgrimage on earth; others, already dead, are purified, while others are glorified"... In a context similar to that of c.7 n.49 of the Const. In a context similar to that of Vatican II's dogmatic Constitution Lumen Gentium, that is, in a description of the total reality of the Church in the beyond, the theme of purgatory is inserted into Paul VI's Profession of Faith: "We



believe that the souls of all those who die in the grace of Christ -who still have to be purified by the fire of purgatory, who immediately after their separation from the body are received, like the Good Thief, by Jesus in Paradise- constitute the People of God after death, which will be totally destroyed on the day of the Resurrection when these souls will be united with their bodies". (Theology of the Beyond. Candido Pozo. Madrid: Editorial Católica, Biblioteca de Autores Católicos, 1970, pages 522-523).

The Council of Florence defined:

"Moreover, if having done penance truly, they should die in the charity of God before having satisfied themselves with fruits worthy of penance for sins of commission and omission, their souls,



after death, are purified by purgatory penalties; and to be freed from these penalties, they take advantage of the suffrages of the living faithful, namely, the sacrifices of the Mass, prayers, and offerings, and other offices of piety that are usually performed, according to the institutions of the Church, by some of the faithful in favor of other faithful" Denz, 693 (1304) (Poza, op. cit.). cit, p. 521).

"The Council of Trent defined the imperfection of man's justice, an imperfection that comes from the reign of temporal punishment, which must be repaired in this life or the future". (Well, op. cit., p. 522).

In short, this is how the Catholic Church defines Purgatory.

Purgatory, 1, 2 (translated by the author)

In another quote from a Catholic source, it acknowledges that the doctrine of Purgatory is based on reason and the religious traditions of pagan peoples, but it cannot make a single biblical argument valid for its existence as a Christian doctrine.

The Catholic Church also recognizes that a powerful reason for teaching such a doctrine is logic and reason. They explain, for example, that: there is, above all, a reason of convenience, accessible even to unbelievers. The moral order of justice, when it is violated, demands reparation. If then, this reparation, due in justice, is not made before death, it must be made or suffered after this life; but it must be very different for him who died in injustice without repentance and for the just who died without paying his whole debt... The argument is confirmed by religious traditions of many peoples, Egyptians, Persians, and Babylonians, who speak of diverse sanctions after death and before the heavenly happiness. (The Eternal Life and the Depth of the Soul. R. Garrigon-Lagrange. Madrid: Ediciones Rialp, 1960, page 234).

We see then, that the Catholic Church recognizes that in this they follow the pagan tradition of other peoples.

Purgatory, 2 (translated by the author)

But one thing is even more evident than this, the belief in the immortality of the soul leads to these wrong concepts, because if the soul (according to the Catholic conception) does not exist, then doctrines of purgatory and eternal torment disappear and have no logical basis. On the other hand, the concept that Masses for the dead serve to shorten the term in which these souls suffer in purgatory, not only includes the concept of salvation by works, the effective intercession of the priest but what is worse, puts the poor at a disadvantage with the rich who can pay Masses for the souls.

If Purgatory existed and Mass helped people to get out of it, the rich would have a great advantage in being able to pay Masses to shorten their suffering. The poor, instead, would depend on the mercy of a priest who would occasionally say a free Mass for them. A former priest wrote: "If we really believed that the Mass would save people from the flames of purgatory, would we make them pay for it? I would save even a dog if I saw one in a fire, and I would not even think of asking to be paid!

Thomas F. Heinze, Answers to My Catholic Friends, 34 (translated by the author)

7.4. Complex passages solved

Despite the multitude of texts, of which we have quoted many here, which sustain the mortality of the soul as part of the general concept of the nature of man, some few texts can leave the superficial reader confused. I will deal with them here always trying to link them to matters already presented.

The first is Jesus' conversation with the so-called "good thief" (I believe there are no good thieves, let us call him the repentant thief). According to some Jesus promised the thief that he would be with him in paradise on the very day of his death on the cross. See the following quote.

The text in question is **Luke 23: 43** "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise". Many believe that the thief went to heaven with Jesus that same Friday. However, they overlook many things. To begin with, the thief did not ask to be taken to heaven at that time. The kind of question the thief asked indicates that he knew that the time of the resurrection was when Christ would come for the second time in his kingdom. Let us note what the previous text says which was the thief's request: **Luke 23: 42** "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom". In other words, he said, "I know that when you come you will raise the dead and my body will be here on earth, perhaps already in the dust, but, although I recognize that I do not deserve eternal life, I hope that you will remember me and raise me up because of your mercy. He did not think that the resurrection event would be immediate or that when he died, he would float away either to the flaming hell because of his sinful behavior or to heaven because of the mercy he was imploring from the almighty Son of God. He knew that the event was in the future. However, there are those who claim that although the request was for a future time, Christ decided to apply the



reward immediately. This sounds reasonable because at the end of the day Christ had and still has the power and does not have to ask anyone's permission to do that act. However, in the answer to his request, there seems to be a contradiction.

The State of the Dead, 8, 9 (translated by the author)

Exactly, even the thief knew that whatever grace Jesus offered him would be for when he came in his kingdom, that is, in the resurrection of the saints at the second coming. But let us follow the logic of the article.

How is it that the thief would be with Christ that very day in heaven if Christ himself did not go to heaven that day? Let us remember that the text supposedly says, "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise". If Christ did not go to heaven that day, we have to admit that there is a major problem of interpretation and certainly Christ did not go to heaven that day of His crucifixion. This is clearly shown by the apostle John in chapter 20 of his gospel when he speaks of Christ's resurrection. In verse 1 he tells us that the events occurred on the first day of the week: "On the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone rolled away from the tomb". And later, when Mary recognizes Jesus and wants to show her affection, Jesus answers her (verse 17): "Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father".



How then do we resolve this whole matter? "Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise". For that, we have to remember that the language used for the New Testament is koine Greek, where there were no commas (,) nor the conjunction "that", which appears in some translations with a note that it was added, supposedly to facilitate translation.

If we honor the original language by removing the comma and eliminating the conjunction that, we get the following translation: "Verily I say unto thee this day, thou shalt be with me in paradise". If in any case, we would like to put a comma it could be used to separate verb tenses (understand: past, present, and future). In this sentence there are two verbs with different tenses, namely, I say (present) and you shall be (future). When Jesus is saying what he is saying? Immediately after today is the other tense (shall be) in the future. So, the correct thing to do would be to put a comma to separate these two times and it would go between today and you will be. Then the verse would look like this: "Verily I say unto thee this day, thou shalt be with me in paradise". This phrase, "verily I say unto thee this day", was widely used at the time. This prayer now harmonizes with the immediate context and with the rest of the passages that clearly indicate that the reward will be given when Christ comes a second time.

The State of the Dead, 9 (translated by the author)

Indeed, Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you today", in the present condition, today that I am hanging on this cross like an evildoer, when few believe in me, when I seem to be the loser, today I promise you this. This is the logical conclusion which also harmonizes with Scripture. Furthermore, as I was made to see by a good friend of mine, who has been a great student of the Word of God, it is very likely that the thief did not die that Friday. Let us remember that the soldiers broke their legs and took them down from the cross, at the same time that they saw that Jesus was already dead. Perhaps the thief was sent to the mass grave outside Jerusalem alive (sounds terrible, but it is likely). This would also have prevented him from being in paradise that day, under the previously supposed denial.

Another somewhat complicated matter is the supposed appearance of Samuel (already deceased) before a request from King Saul to the pythoness of Endor. Those who maintain that Samuel really appeared before the call of a spiritualist do not understand that God does not associate with darkness. If God had strictly forbidden the activity of the spiritualists, he could not use them to give a message to Saul.

When Saul inquired for Samuel, the Lord did not cause Samuel to appear to Saul. He saw nothing. Satan was not allowed to disturb the rest of Samuel in the grave, and bring him up in reality to the witch of Endor. God does not give Satan the power to resurrect the dead. But Satan's angels



assume the form of dead friends, and speak and act like them, that through professed dead friends he can the better carry on his work of deception. Satan knew Samuel well, and he knew how to represent him before the witch of Endor, and to utter correctly the fate of Saul and his sons.

Satan will come in a very plausible manner to such as he can deceive, and will insinuate himself into their favor, and lead them almost imperceptibly from God. He wins them under his control, cautiously at first, until their perceptibilities become blunted. Then he will make bolder suggestions, until he can lead them to commit almost any degree of crime. When he has led them fully into his snare, he is then willing that they should see where they are, and he exults in their confusion, as in the case of Saul. He had suffered Satan to lead him a willing captive, and now Satan spreads before Saul a correct description of his fate. By giving Saul a correct statement of his end, through the woman of Endor, Satan opens a way for Israel to be instructed by his satanic cunning, that they may, in their rebellion against God, learn of him, and by thus doing, sever the last link which would hold them to God.

Saul knew that in this last act, of consulting the witch of Endor, he cut the last shred which held him to God. He knew that if he had not before willfully separated himself from God, this act sealed that separation, and made it final. He had made an agreement with death, and a covenant with hell. The cup of his iniquity was full.

**Ellen G. White,
Conflict and Courage, 172**

Two verses stand out during this séance in which those who claim that the spirit that appears was actually that of the late Samuel are focused. Let's look at the passage: "And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried aloud, and spake unto Saul, saying, why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul. And the king said unto her, Fear not: what sawest thou? And the woman answered Saul, I have seen gods ascending out of the earth. And he said unto her, what is their form? And she said, an old man is coming, covered with a mantle. And Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed his head to the earth, and did reverence". In verse 12 it says that the woman saw Samuel. We must remember that one thing is what one sees and another thing may be what we are really seeing. We should not be surprised that spirits of demons pose as loved ones, this is what happens daily during spiritualistic sessions around the world. The apostle Paul warned us about this and God's messenger also warns us about it. Saul reaped what he sowed, for he walked in darkness and received dark counsel, and he came in disguise to meet another in disguise.



The State of the Dead, 13 (translated by the author)

The key text that is overlooked in this passage and that sheds much light on this issue is the one found precisely in the middle, verse 13, when Saul asks the woman what she has seen and she answers: "I have seen gods coming up out of the earth". The Holy Scriptures affirm that there is only one God and he is in heaven. These gods that come up from earth are clearly spirits of demons that appear with the only purpose of deceiving, since it is the best thing they know how to do.

The State of the Dead, 14 (translated by the author)

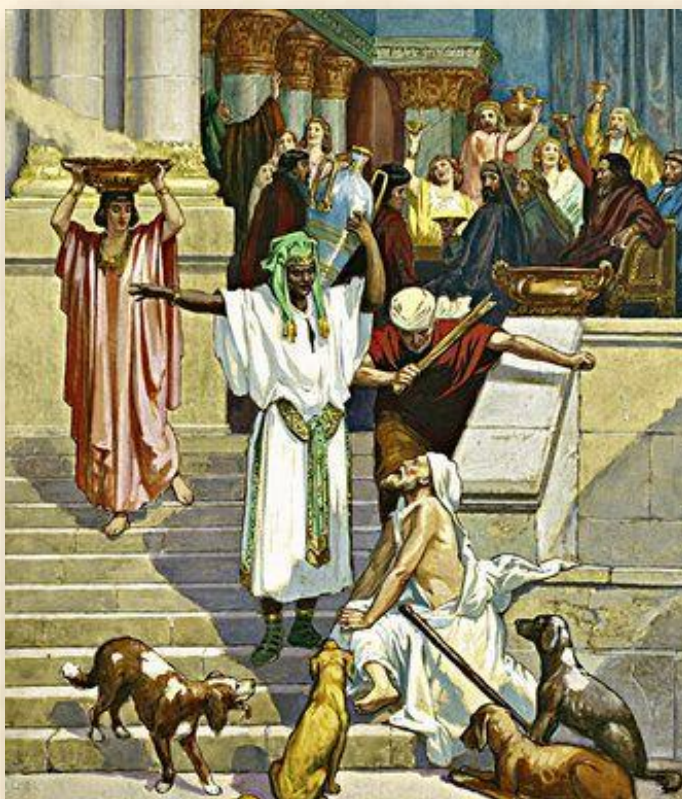
Let's move on to another controversial topic. A parable of Jesus to exemplify people's resistance to hearing the Word of God has been intended to be used to demonstrate the existence of heaven and hell. First, we must consider something basic. A parable is a story that helps to present a great truth in a simple but approximate way. One cannot take many of them literally and in every detail. To base a doctrine on a parable would be certain nonsense, especially when there are so many verses that prove the opposite.

There was a certain rich man who was customarily clothed in purple and fine linen and making merry in luxury every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, who was laid at his gate, full of sores and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. But even the dogs came and licked his sores. And it happened that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich one also died and was buried. And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father



Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things. But now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, there is a great chasm fixed between you and us; so that they desiring to pass from here to you cannot, nor can they pass over to us from there. And he said, I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may testify to them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham said to him, they have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them. And he said, No, father Abraham, but if one should go to them from the dead, they would repent. And he said to him, if they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded, even though one rose from the dead.

Luke 16: 19-31



In this parable, Jesus uses the method of the absurd. For example, even though he says there is "a great chasm" between supposed heaven and hell and that he "saw Abraham from afar, and Lazarus in his bosom" they can talk to each other.

Those who extract a doctrine from this account should accept that Abraham would have the authority to send someone from heaven to hell or to make him return to the world of the living. Furthermore, in the story, Abraham says people should listen to "Moses and the prophets"; which is the reason for the story, that God has provided the means for us to know the truth. Another purpose of this parable is to show that there is only one chance for salvation, while one is alive. It is also interesting to note that Abraham (always speaking of this fictitious account) says that these people "will not be persuaded, even though one rose from the dead", where it is evident that he maintains that this, that the dead rise, cannot happen.

7.5. The Resurrection of babies

A subject that has always aroused my sensitivity is this. Today, with all the more reason, because of what life has made us live, I believe with all my heart that God will give us back the little ones we lost. While the Bible is not clear to support this issue, instead the Spirit of Prophecy does so with marked clarity. I will let Elena give us words of hope and comfort to those of us who have lost our little ones...

The King of kings descends upon the cloud, wrapped in flaming fire. The heavens are rolled together as a scroll, the earth trembles before Him, and every mountain and island are moved out of its place...

Amid the reeling of the earth, the flash of lightning, and the roar of thunder, the voice of the Son of God calls forth the sleeping saints. He looks upon the graves of the righteous, then, raising His hands to heaven, He cries: "Awake, awake, awake, ye that sleep in the dust, and arise!" Throughout the length and breadth of the earth, the dead shall hear that voice, and they that hear shall live. And the whole earth shall ring with the tread of the exceeding great army of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. From the prison-house of death, they come, clothed with immortal glory, crying: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" **1 Corinthians 15: 55**. And the living righteous and the risen saints unite their voices in a long, glad shout of victory.

All come forth from their graves the same in stature as when they entered the tomb... But all arise with the freshness and vigor of eternal youth... The mortal, corruptible form, devoid of



comeliness, once polluted with sin, becomes perfect, beautiful, and immortal. All blemishes and deformities are left in the grave...

The living righteous are changed “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye”. At the voice of God, they were glorified; now they are made immortal and with the risen saints are caught up to meet their Lord in the air. Angels “gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other”.

As the little infants come forth immortal from their dusty beds, they immediately wing their way to their mothers’ arms.

Friends long separated by death are united, nevermore to part, and with songs of gladness ascend together to the City of God.

**Ellen G. White,
Our Father cares, 336**

Oh, wonderful redemption! long talked of, long hoped for, contemplated with eager anticipation, but never fully understood.

The living righteous are changed “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye”. At the voice of God, they were glorified; now they are made immortal and with the risen saints are caught up to meet their Lord in the air. Angels “gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other”. Little children are borne by holy angels to their mothers’ arms. Friends long separated by death are united, nevermore to part, and with songs of gladness ascend together to the City of God.



From the day when the first pair turned their sorrowing steps from Eden, the children of faith have waited for the coming of the Promised One to break the destroyer’s power and bring them again to the lost Paradise.

Ellen G. White, Child Guidance, 566, 567

Our fondest hopes are often blighted here. Our loved ones are torn from us by death. We close their eyes and habit them for the tomb, and lay them away from our sight. But hope bears our spirits up. We are not parted forever, but shall meet the loved ones who sleep in Jesus. They shall come again from the land of the enemy. The Life-giver is coming. Myriads of holy angels escort Him on His way. He bursts the bands of death, breaks the fetters of the tomb, the precious captives come forth in health and immortal beauty.

As the little infants come forth immortal from their dusty beds, they immediately wing their way to their mothers’ arms. They meet again nevermore to part. But many of the little ones have no mother there. We listen in vain for the rapturous song of triumph from the mother. The angels receive the motherless infants and conduct them to the tree of life.

Jesus places the golden ring of light, the crown upon their little heads. God grant that the dear mother of “Eva” may be there, that her little wings may be folded upon the glad bosom of her mother.

Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, Volume II, 259, 260

As the little infants come forth immortal from their dusty beds, they immediately wing their way to their mother’s arms. They meet again nevermore to part. But many of the little ones have no mother there. We listen in vain for the rapturous song of triumph from the mother. The angels receive the motherless infants and conduct them to the tree of life.

Some questioned whether the little children of even believing parents should be saved, because they have had no test of character and all must be tested and their character determined by trial. The question is asked, “How can little children have this test and trial?” I answer that the faith of



the believing parents covers the children, as when God sent His judgments upon the first-born of the Egyptians...

Whether all the children of unbelieving parents will be saved we cannot tell, because God has not made known His purpose in regard to this matter, and we had better leave it where God has left it and dwell upon subjects made plain in His Word.

Ellen G. White, Last Day Events, 293

If ever death took one of your little ones and snatched him from your arms, be faithful, because your faithfulness will give you the assurance of receiving them when the Lord comes, so that you will never be separated, forever. This is my hope, perhaps yours as well...

God bless you.