



THE TRUTH SEEKER

PSALM 119:105

with **Dr. Robert Morey**

"...earnestly contend for the faith." Jude 3

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by *Dr. Robert Morey*

Introduction

Unless the Lord returns in our lifetime, we will all experience death; thus, we need to understand it and to face it with peace instead of fear.

Part I

I. THE FACT OF DEATH

A. The inescapable reality of death removes all the vain hopes of physical immortality.

1. Science will *never* conquer death.
2. The occult cannot avoid it.
3. The cults may deny it as a teaching, but they experience it as a reality. One example is Mary Baker Eddy, who cooked up the *Christian Science* religion.

CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE

1. Death is unnatural.
2. Death flows from sin.
3. Death is a time of sorrow (John 11:33-38).
4. Death will be done away with when Jesus returns (Rev. 21:4).

HUMANIST ATTITUDE

1. Death is natural.
2. Death is part of life.
3. Death should mean little or nothing to us.
4. Death will always be here.

B. God has ordained that each of us shall die once and then pass on to judgment (Hebrews 9:27; Ecclesiastes 3:1-2; Job 14:1-5).

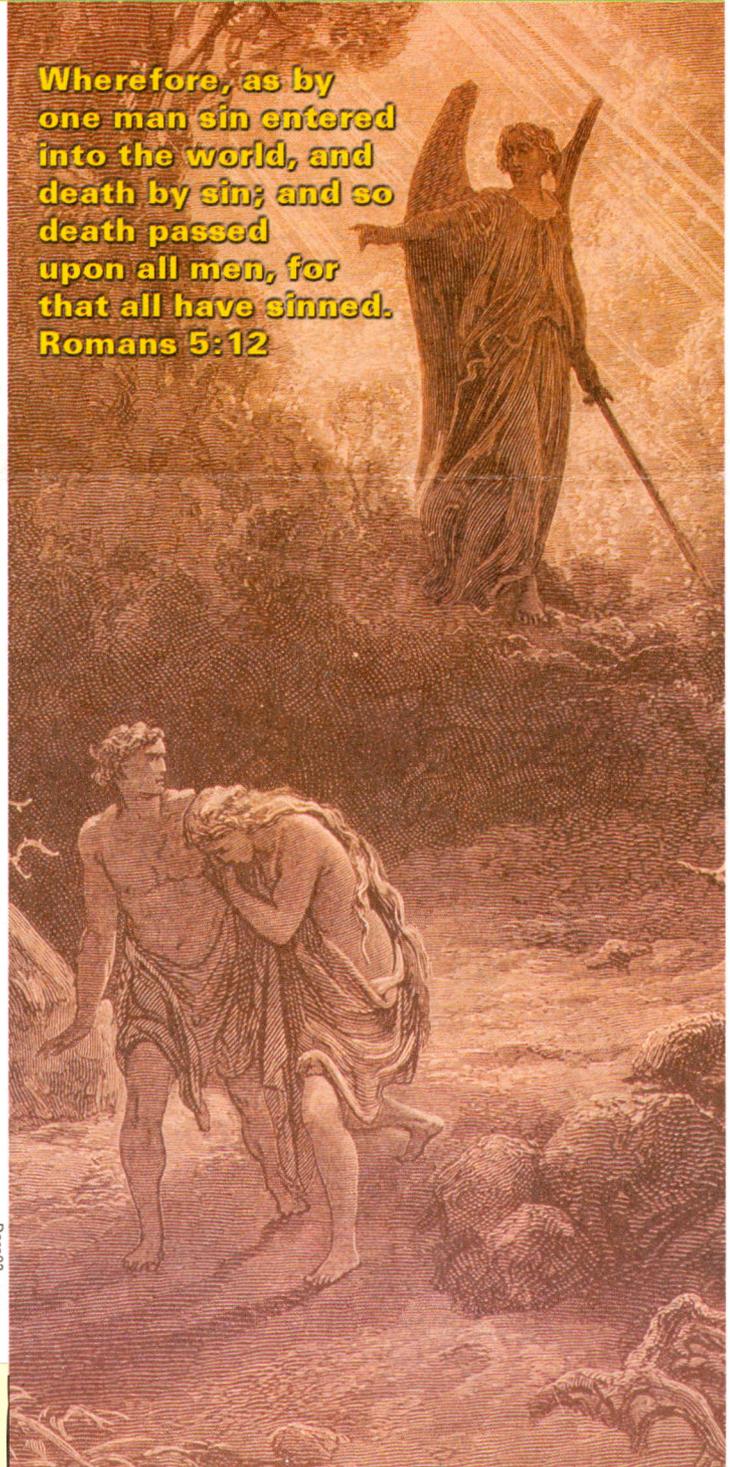
II. THE ORIGIN OF DEATH

A. Death is the punishment placed upon man because of Adam's sin and our sin (Genesis 2:16-17; Romans 5:12, 17, 6:23; James 1:14-15).

B. This means that death isn't "natural," "normal" or "human." It is unnatural and sub-normal. All the humanistic concepts about death being "natural" or part of human nature is false.

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Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.
Romans 5:12



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Death is the terrible and unnatural ripping of the soul out of a man's body. Death tears man in half. Man was originally made to live, not to die.

III. THE NATURE OF DEATH

A. Death takes place when the spirit/soul leaves the body (James 2:26). Thus, death means *separation*, not unconsciousness, annihilation or "soul sleep."

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Revelation 12:9

Spiritual Death

Genesis 2:17
Ephesians 2:1-3
1st Timothy 5:6

Physical Death

1. The soul leaves the body at death (Genesis 35:18; 1st Kings 17:21-22; Ecclesiasties 12:6-7; Acts 7:59; James 2:26).

2. At death, a person is gathered to where others exist (Gen. 25:8, 17; 49:29, 33).

B. The proof that death means the separation of the spirit/soul from the body may be described as follows:

1. At the first Biblical occurrence of the word "death," it cannot mean "unconsciousness," "annihilation" or "soul sleep" (Genesis 2:17; 3:8,24). Adam and Eve "died" when they ate the fruit; that is, they were *separated* from God.

2. What death means on the spiritual level is what it means on the physical level.

3. The statements of Scripture show that death is the separation of the spirit/soul from the body with the conscious life continuing.

- a. Matthew 22:32
- b. Luke 16:19-31
- c. Luke 9:30 cf. Deuteronomy 34:5
- d. Luke 23:43 cf. 1st Corinthians 12:2,4
- e. Philippians 1:21-24
- f. 1st Corinthians 5:1-9
- g. 1st Thessalonians 5:10
- h. Hebrews 12:22-23
- i. Revelation 6:9-11 cf. 4:1

IV. THE CHARACTER OF DEATH

A. It is the last enemy to be destroyed (1st Corinthians 15:26, 54-56; Hebrews 2:14-18).

B. It is gain for the Christian (Philippians 1:21; 1st Corinthians 5:8; Revelation 14:13).

V. APPLICATION

A. Are you ready for death?

B. Have you provided for your family in the case of your death?

C. We can face death with peace if we have Christ.

Part II

I. THE HEBREW "SHEOL"

A. This word is found 65 times in The Old Testament. It is mistranslated every time by the KJV [King James Version]. The KJV translates "sheol" as "grave" 31 times, "hell" 31 times and "pit" three times.

B. The etymology or root of “sheol” is still debatable. Some scholars feel it is from the word “Sha-al” which means “inquiry.”

Thus, “sheol” would refer to the land of inquiry where the heathen seek to communicate with the spirits of the dead through necromancy.

Others feel “sheol” comes from “sha-al” which originally meant “hollow.” “Sheol” would then refer to the hollow place where the spirits of the dead exist.

C. The basic meaning of the word in extra-Biblical literature during the age of The Old Testament is clear. “Sheol” always meant “underworld,” “the land of the dead,” “the shadowy place of the dead.” This is the meaning of the word in all the nations of the Fertile Crescent.

No one has ever found any literature in this time period where “sheol” was understood as “non-existence” or “annihilation.”

All archaeological finds point to “sheol” as referring to the nether world. That this is taught in The Old Testament will be demonstrated. (Brown, Driver & Briggs: *A Hebrew and English Lexicon Of The Old Testament*, p.982)

D. Taking the principle of progressive revelation from Hebrews 1:1–2, we don’t expect to find in The Old Testament a complete picture of what happens to the soul of man after death. The complete picture awaited the fuller revelation of The New Testament.

Thus, we will find The Old Testament doesn’t give us all the answers to the many questions we have concerning the “other side.”

E. We can start by pointing out what “sheol” cannot mean.

1. Sheol doesn’t mean death because the Hebrew word “moth” signifies “death.”

2. Sheol doesn’t mean “the grave,” for the Hebrew word “kever” means “grave” or “sepulchre” (Genesis 50:5).

Indeed, in such places as Genesis 37:35, “sheol” cannot mean “grave.” Graves can be purchased, dug, uncovered, sold, defiled, and opened and closed by man, while “sheol” is never spoken of in such ways. Only God puts man into sheol.

3. Sheol doesn’t mean “the corruption of the body” because the Hebrew word “shachath” means this.

F. What “kever” and “shachath” are to the body, “sheol” is to the soul. It is the soul of man which enters “sheol,” not his body (Psalm 16:10; 30:3; 49:14; 86:13; 89:48; Proverbs 23:14, etc.).

The Old Testament people desired that their *soul* be delivered from sheol. They never spoke that way of their *body*.

G. That The Old Testament people and prophets didn’t believe that “sheol” meant “non-existence” or “soul-sleep” or

“unconsciousness” is clear from the continual problem of *necromancy*, that is, seeking to contact the spirits of the dead through mediums. The people constantly fell into the sin of necromancy throughout Israel’s history (1st Kings 17:7–23; 1st Samuel 28:7–25).

If they believed that the dead were unconscious or non-existent, they wouldn’t have practiced necromancy, which assumes the dead can listen and respond to inquiry.

That the prophets didn’t believe that the dead were unconscious is seen from the fact that they never used such an idea to correct the people’s necromancy. They condemned it as forbidden, not as impossible (Deuteronomy 18:9–14).

H. Sheol has gates by which one enters and bars which keep one in (Isaiah 38:10; Job 17:16).

I. After death, one enters “sheol” through its gates. What’s on the other side of those gates isn’t clearly stated.

...We will find The Old Testament doesn’t give us all the answers to the many questions we have concerning the “other side.”

The following things are mentioned in The Old Testament as describing Sheol.

1. Sheol is a shadowy place or place of darkness (Job 10:21–22, Psalm 143:3).

2. It is beneath the world, in the lowest parts of the Earth (Isaiah 44:23; 57:9; Ezekiel 26:20; Amos 9:2).

3. It is the place where one’s ancestors (fathers) dwell. You go to be with them in Sheol. This cannot refer to a common grave, but to going to the underworld where the souls of the ancestors dwell (Genesis 15:15; 25:8; 35:29; 37:35; 49:33; Numb. 20:24; 31:2; Deuteronomy 32:50; 34:5; 1st Samuel 12:23).

4. Because “sheol” is exposed to God’s sight, His anger burns in the deepest “sheol” (Job 26:6; Deuteronomy 32:22). Evidently, there are divisions within “sheol” (higher vs. lower).

J. The condition of those in “sheol” isn’t clearly defined in The Old Testament. The following things can be stated with the caution that while The Old Testament may state something about those in “sheol,” it never *explains* what is stated.

1. Once in “sheol,” all earthly pursuits, such as the planning and executing of words, are no longer possible.

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No earthly pleasures can be enjoyed such as the giving of thanks or praise in public worship, eating, drinking, etc. Those in "sheol" don't have any knowledge or wisdom about what's happening in the land of the living (Ecclesiastes 9:10; Psalm 6:5, etc.).

2. Those in "sheol" may converse with one another (Isaiah 14:9–20; 44:23; Ezekiel 32:21). This hardly fits the "soul-sleep" theory.
3. Because God's anger burns in "sheol" against His enemies (Deuteronomy 32:22), pain and sorrow are experienced by some in "sheol" (Psalm 116:3; 1st Samuel 22:6; Psalm 18:5). The expressions, "the pains of sheol," and "the sorrows of sheol" demonstrate that "sheol" doesn't mean "unconscious non-existence." How can non-existence or unconsciousness feel pain or sorrow?
- K. The Old Testament doesn't develop a concept of "Hell" except to state that after the resurrection, the wicked will suffer eternal shame (Daniel 12:1–2).

Neither does The Old Testament develop the concept of "heaven" except to hint that believers dwell there after death (Psalm 73:24–25), awaiting the eternal bliss which would come after the resurrection (Daniel 12:1–2). What's clear is that both believer and unbeliever enter "sheol" at death. They may separate after entering, but both go through the gates of "sheol."

II. HADES

- A. This Greek word, "Hades," is found eleven times in The New Testament. The KJV [King James Version] mistranslated the word 10 times as "Hell" and once as "grave." In 1st Corinthians 15:55, it translates "Hades" as "grave." But better manuscripts have a different word than Hades. Thus, The New Testament text actually has the word "Hades" only ten times.
- B. "Hades" was consistently used in the Greek version of The Old Testament as the Greek equivalent for the Hebrew word "sheol." This doesn't mean that The New Testament picks up where The Old Testament left off by progressively developing the concept of what happens to the soul of man after death. We will expect that the fuller revelation of Christ and the apostles will clarify what was vague in The Old Testament (Hebrews 1:1–3).
- C. The basic meaning of "Hades" in contemporary extra-Biblical literature is "the underworld" or "the place where the soul of man goes after death." No one has ever found places where "Hades" meant "unconsciousness" or "non-existence." All Greek lexicons record this basic meaning of Hades.
- D. We can start by pointing out what "Hades" cannot mean.

1. "Hades" isn't death because the Greek word "thanatos" means death.

2. "Hades" isn't the grave because "Mneema" means "grave" or "sepulchre."

3. "Hades" isn't "Hell"—the final place of eternal judgment—because "gehenna" and "the lake of fire" refer to this place.
4. "Hades" isn't heaven—the place believers go at death—because "ouranos" is the Greek word for "heaven."
5. "Hades" isn't the place of eternal bliss which the righteous will enjoy after the resurrection because the new Earth is the name of that place.
- E. "Hades" can be entered only by death (Luke 16:23). Thus, "death" is always placed before "Hades" (Revelation 1:18; 6:8, 20:13–14).
- F. The wicked enter "Hades" at death and are in conscious torment, being continually punished (Luke 16:23 cf. 2nd Peter 2:9). Note: 2nd Peter 2:9 is clear that the wicked are under continuous punishment or torture.

1. The wicked are being "held." The Greek is "present active infinitive," "are continuously held," [The literal Greek].
2. They are "being punished." The Greek is "present passive participle," "are continuously being punished or tortured," [The literal Greek].

- G. Before Christ's ascension, believers as well as unbelievers were said to enter into "sheol." With Christ's death on the cross, The New Testament pictures believers after death as entering "paradise" (Luke 23:43), which is the third heaven (1st Corinthians 12:2, 4), to be with Christ (Philippians 1:23), which is far better than Hades. They are present with the Lord (1st Corinthians 5:6–8), worshipping with the angelic hosts of heaven (Hebrews 12:22–23) at the altar of God (Revelation 6:9–11). Thus believers don't now enter Hades.

- H. "Hades" is the temporary, intermediate state between death and the resurrection where the wicked suffer. "Hades" will be emptied at the resurrection and then the wicked will be cast into "Hell" (Gehenna).

III. GEHENNA

- A. This word is found twelve times in The New Testament. It is correctly translated in each case as "Hell" by the KJV [King James Version].
- B. It was originally referred to as "the Valley of Hinnom" which was just outside the city of Jerusalem (Joshua 15:8).

It became the place where idolatrous Jews gave human sacrifices to pagan deities (1st Kings 23:10; 1st Chronicles 28:3; 33:6, etc.). Because of these horrible idolatrous practices, the Valley of Hinnom was hated and considered "unclean" by pious Jews.

In Christ's day, this hatred of the Valley of Hinnom caused the valley to become the town dump where all the garbage of Jerusalem could be thrown. Any unclean bodies were thrown into it as well.

Because garbage was constantly thrown into the valley, the fires never stopped burning and the worms never stopped eating. This picture of an unclean garbage dump where the fire and worms never died out became, to the Jewish mind, an appropriate description of what fate awaited all the pagans.

Gehenna came to be understood as the final, eternal garbage dump where all the idolaters would be thrown. The wicked would suffer in Gehenna forever because the fires would never stop burning them and the worms would never stop gnawing them.

C. Jesus Christ agreed with and taught the above contemporary view of the final or ultimate fate awaiting the wicked.

1. He used the word Gehenna which could only mean “Hell” to the minds of his hearers.
2. He taught that Gehenna was a place of condemnation (Matthew 23:33).
3. Gehenna was connected with the Day of Judgment (Matthew 5:22; 23:33; cf. Revelation 20:14).
4. Gehenna was a place where the body as well as the soul could be tormented (Matthew 5:22; Matthew 10:28; Mark 9:43–48).
5. Only God can cast someone body and soul into Gehenna (Matthew 10:28; Luke 12:5). This proves that Gehenna cannot be the grave, for men can cast bodies into graves while only God can cast body AND soul into Gehenna!
6. The fires of Gehenna never die out and the worms keep on gnawing (Mark 9:47–48).
7. Gehenna is a place of eternal shame, grief and torment (Daniel 12:1–2; Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 24:51; 25:41, 46; Mark 9:48; Revelation 14:10–11; 19:20; 20:10, 15).
8. The wicked are “cast” into Gehenna and “destroyed” (Matthew 5:29–30; 10:28). That the word “destroyed” doesn’t mean “annihilate” or “pass into non-existence” is clear from the usage of the word in The New Testament (for example, see Matthew 9:17; Luke 15:4, 6, 8, 9; John 6:12, 27; 1st Cor. 4:9, etc).

All Greek Lexicons establish that “apolluo” means to “render something useless, good for nothing, lost, etc.” When it is used in connection with Gehenna it emphasizes the picture that the wicked are “good for nothing.” Thus they should be thrown on the garbage dump of eternity—Gehenna. (See my book, *Death And The Afterlife* available from this ministry)

Special Note On the Book Of Ecclesiastes and Death

I. The Problem Before Us

Those cults which teach “soul sleep” or annihilationism use Ecclesiastes as the main source of Biblical proof for their position. They include the SDAs [Seventh Day Adventists], and JW’s [Jehovah’s Witnesses].

II. The Real Problem

The underlying problem with the cultists’ misuse of Ecclesiastes is an ignorance of the basic rules of hermeneutics. They misinterpret verses, not knowing how to rightfully divide doctrine in the Bible.

- A. They depend upon The Old Testament almost to the exclusion of The New Testament. They fail to see the nature of progres-

sive revelation, the vagueness of The Old Testament or the priority of The New Testament over The Old Testament.

B. They ignore the contexts of a verse:

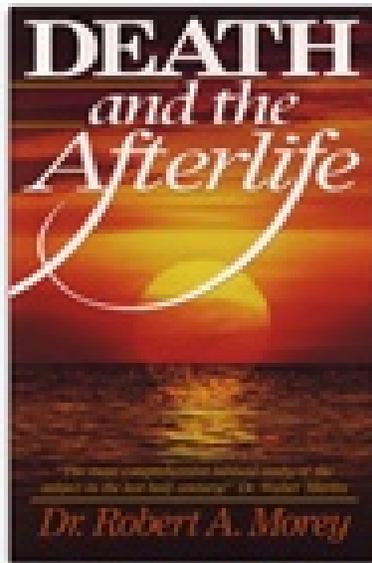
1. The immediate paragraph.
2. The chapter.
3. The section of the book (the outline of a book).
4. The book as a whole.
5. The book’s place in the canon.
6. Its stage or place in the unfolding drama of redemptive history.
7. The historical, cultural and linguistic background of the words, phrases, idiomatic expressions and figurative language.

III. Ecclesiastes Is a Case In Point

- A. In terms of its historical, cultural and linguistic context, Ecclesiastes falls into the genre of ancient literature which posed one speaker against another. There are ancient parallels to Ecclesiastes where two opposing philosophies dialogue. The Hebrew grammar is clear on this: Speaker #1 vs. Speaker #2.
- B. Ecclesiastes is in the “wisdom” section of The Old Testament
- C. It teaches us about life and how to live it, in a way different from Proverbs. Proverbs tells us what happens if we begin *with* God, while Ecclesiastes tells what happens if we begin *without* God. (Death and Afterlife, p.216)
- D. Speaker #1 is devoid of God’s grace and looks at life from a humanist view. He is “under the sun,” that is, naturalistic.
- E. The humanist viewpoint is given from Chapter 1—Chapter 11. The theist answers in Chapter 12. There are two different speakers representing two opposite ways of looking at life.
- F. That we are dealing with humanist man in Chapters 1–11 is clear. “Everything is meaningless” (1:2); “I hate life” (2:17, 18); “I am nothing but an animal” (3:18); “I will die like an animal” (3:19–20); “Pleasure and money answer everything” (10:19).
- G. Humanists object to the common religious beliefs of the day.
1. Wisdom & knowledge bring joy and comfort (1:18) vs. wisdom & knowledge bring grief and pain.
 2. The spirit or soul of man ascends to heaven at death while animals expire downward (3:21) vs. Who knows if this happens?
- H. The theist answers in 12:1, 6–7, 13–14. Premise #1: Death doesn’t end it all. Premise #2: You’ll be held accountable at death for how you lived.

Conclusion

FEAR GOD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS! The old Gospel story of a loving Jesus who came to save us from an eternal Hell and to give us a home in heaven is still the same Gospel we preach today. Those who deny an afterlife are preaching “another” gospel and fall under the condemnation of Gal. 1:8.



Recommended Book: *Death and the Afterlife*

This book is the most detailed work on the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and eternal conscious punishment. It also refutes the doctrines of soul sleep, conditionalism, occultism and universalism. Dr. Morey deals with the original languages of Scripture, paying careful attention to the laws of hermeneutics. He exegetes' difficult passages which are often perverted by cultic and liberal theology. It is recommended by Walter Martin, Roger Nicole, and Gary Habermas. 315 pages



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