DEATH
The Enemy!

The Greatest Victory

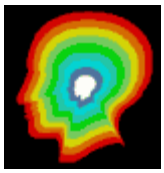
What do you think was the greatest event that has taken place on earth since creation?

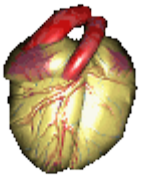
Was it the birth of Christ?

Was it the crucifixion?

Was it the resurrection of Christ?

Still others would say that the resurrection was the most important for without the resurrection we would have no hope beyond the grave!





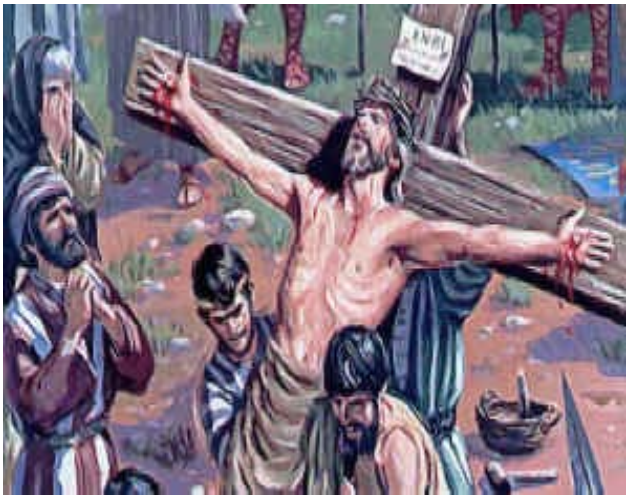
This is a little like asking: “Which is the most important: your head or your heart?” Both are vital! However…

The resurrection of Christ was the key event in His life that proved He was whom He claimed to be, The Son of God, the Messiah. And that His sacrifice had been accepted by His Father in our behalf. It was his resurrection that proved that He had gained the victory over death.

In the Book of Revelation He said: “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.” Revelation 1:18.

When asked by the religious leaders of his day for a sign that He was what He claimed to be, He said that the only sign that He would give them was His resurrection. “Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said

unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." John 2: 18,19.



He spoke of this sign repeatedly. He said that He would be killed and that He would rise from the dead on the third day. The religious leaders took note of what He predicted

When He was slain, they went to the Roman rulers and said to them: "Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulcher be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.." Matthew 27: 63,64.

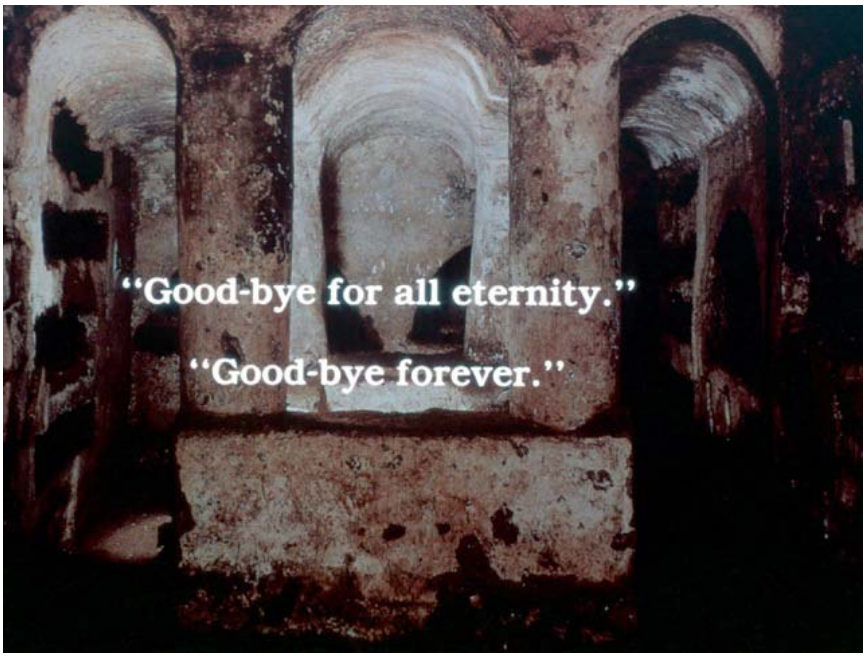
The Rulers were afraid that somehow the body would disappear and it would seem that Christ had been raised. Pilate sent a guard and they sealed the stone that covered the mouth of the cave with a Roman seal. Now no one could take His body, no one except His Father.

Early Sunday morning while it was yet dark a brilliant angel descended from Heaven and rolled back the stone that covered the door of that tomb and He called Christ forth.

The risen Saviour stepped forth the victor over death, the mighty conqueror! The soldiers were struck down as dead men by the glory of that one angel.

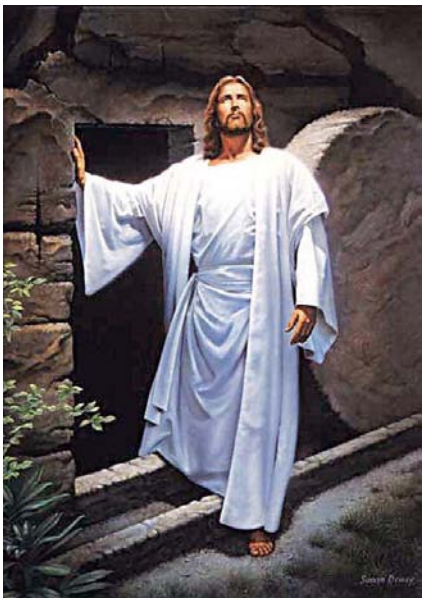
The story of His resurrection was the driving power of the early Christian church, as the Romans had no hope beyond the grave, neither did many of the Israelites as the Sadducee sect did not believe in a resurrection. The only thing that they knew was that the grave was a deep, dark pit out of which no one could hope to have life. Now the Christians had a message of hope, there was a life to be had beyond the grave.

The catacombs under the city of Rome show the difference between the pagan's death and that of the Christians. Notice the epitaphs on the burial place of the tombs of those who died in pagan hopelessness.



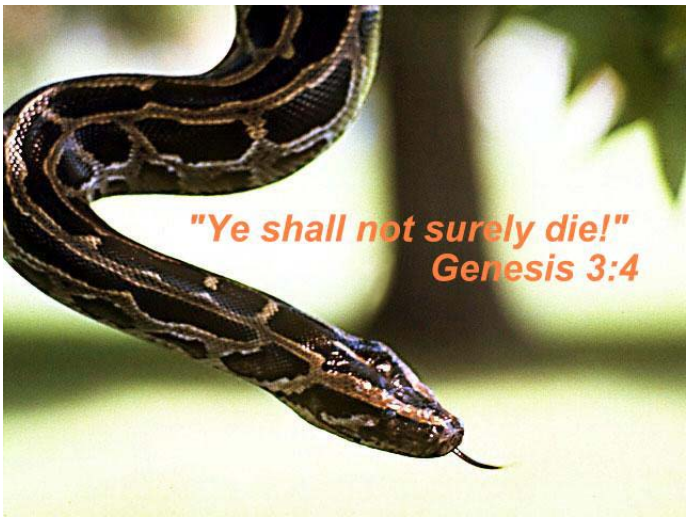
Over and over again is inscribed these words of sorrow: Goodbye forever or Goodbye for eternity.

Now, notice what the inscriptions are on the tombs of the Christians: Goodbye until we meet again or Goodnight until the morning. Their tombs were inscribed with hope and courage, looking forward to the resurrection day.



"I am He that liveth, and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore. And I have the keys of Hell and of Death." Revelation 1:18 There is no real hope for the future beyond death unless Christ is our personal Saviour.

When God created man it was never His intention that anyone or anything would ever die. After God created Adam the Bible tells us in Genesis l:32 that everything was not only very good, it was perfect! There was no death, sickness or sorrow on Planet Earth before Adam and Eve's fall.



God warned that if they sinned; they would die but Satan told Eve at the forbidden tree: “Ye shall not surely die.” (vs.4.) This is the first lie recorded in the Bible about death and the first sermon on the immortality of the soul!

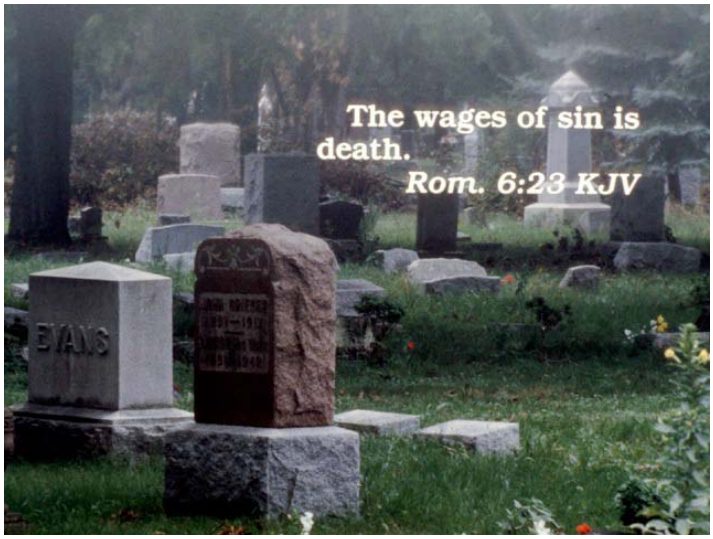
Eve chose to believe the Devil and ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and Adam chose to do the same. To partake of the Tree of Life after that would mean eternal life in sin. But the sentence of disobedience was death.

"And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever; therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden . . So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." *Genesis 3:22-24*

What did God tell them?

"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." ***Genesis 3:19***

Because of sin, God has given each person a brief, probationary life to test his choices and actions—and then comes death.
Ezekiel 18:4—"The soul that sinneth, it shall die."
Romans 5:12—"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin."



So it is clear that man was originally created with the *possibility* of becoming immortal—and living forever. But he was not created with *inherent* immortality. He was subject to death, if he sinned. He did not have "natural immortality."

Because mankind sins, mankind is mortal, subject to death.

Is man immortal?
Job 4:17—"Shall mortal man be more just than God . . his Maker?"

Who only has immortality?

1 Timothy 6:16—"[God] who only hath immortality."

Only God has immortality; and the word, "immortal," is found only once in the Bible, and refers to God: *1 Timothy 1:17*—"Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God."

So we have these Bible facts about mortal and immortal:

1. Man is mortal *(Job 4:17).*

2. God is immortal *(1 Tim 1:17).*

3. God only has immortality *(1 Tim 6:16).*

4. Man must seek for immortality *(Rom 2:7).*

5. Immortality is brought to light through the gospel *(2 Tim 1:10).*

6. Immortality will be bestowed upon those who are redeemed at the second coming of Christ *(1 Cor 15:51-55).*

In view of all this Bible evidence, why is it that some people believe that man has innate, or "natural," immortality? If that were true, he would not die. Yet people are dying all about us.

Notice how Adam was created by God: “And the LORD 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.

God took the elements of the earth and made a body for man. But man, at that point was only a corpse. It took something more to make him a living being. God breathed into Adam’s nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul. Consider an equation like this:

Body + Breath = A Living Soul

Body - Breath = Corpse.

A simple illustration will help explain this: The *creation of man* is like making a wooden box. The body is like the boards; the breath of life is like the nails. Put the nails into the boards, and you now have a box—which is like the living soul. The *death of man* is the opposite: Remove the nails from the boards, and there is no more box.

Here it is from the Bible:
Creation: "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,*
Death: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." *Ecclesiastes 12:7.*
Psalm 146:4—"His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."

SPIRIT = BREATH OF LIFE

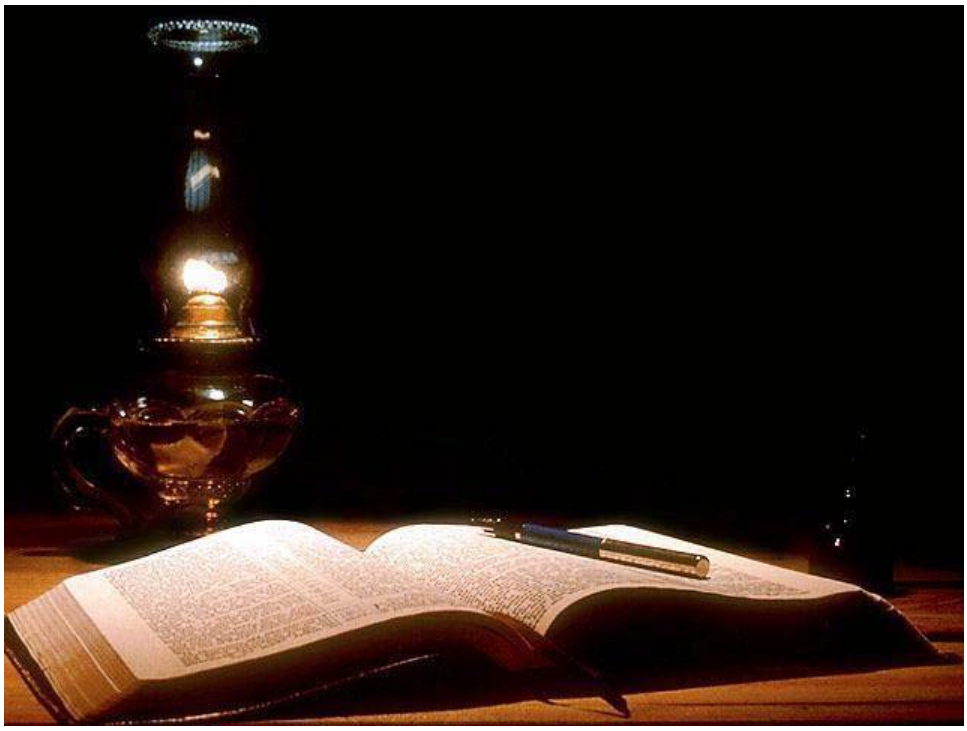
BODY+ BREATH = LIVING SOUL

BODY- BREATH = CORPSE

Is a man awake after he dies?
Ecclesiastes 9:5—"The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything."

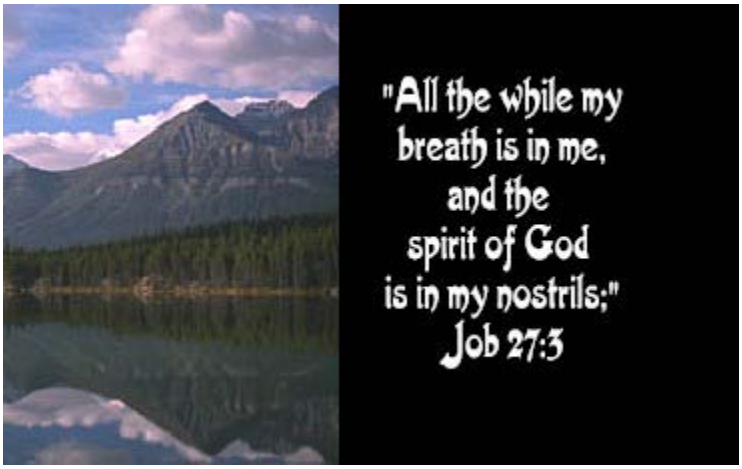
Ecclesiastes 9:10—"There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

THE BIBLE - TRUTH PROVIDED!

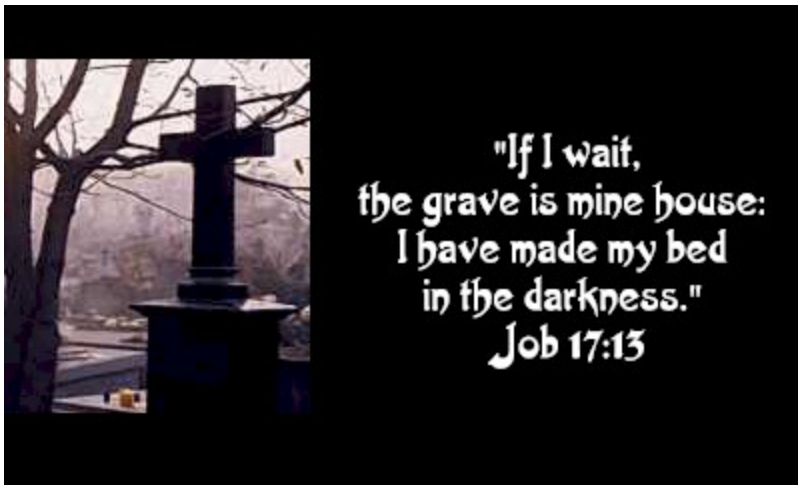


Let us look at a few more texts that give us information about death.

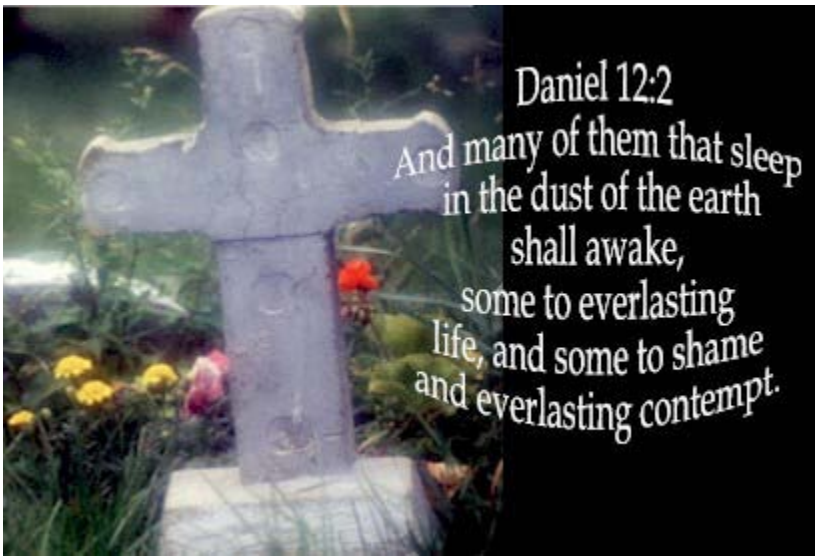
1- Life = the Breath of God

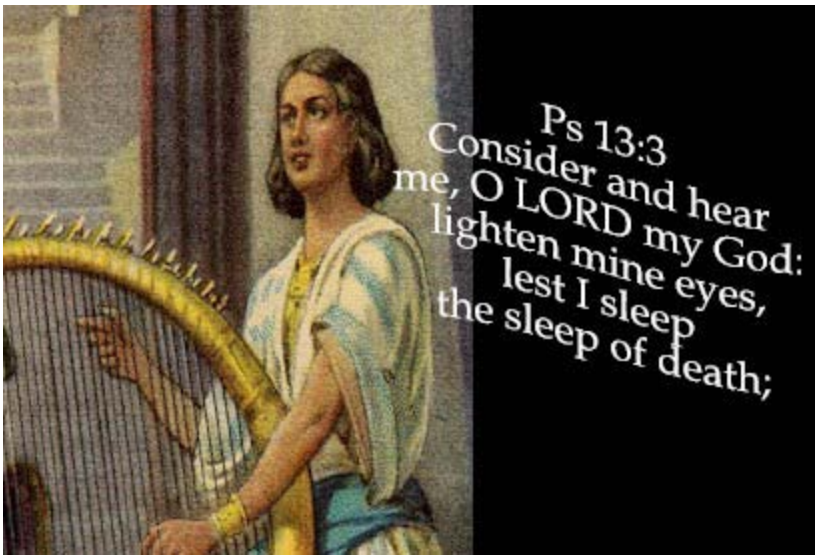


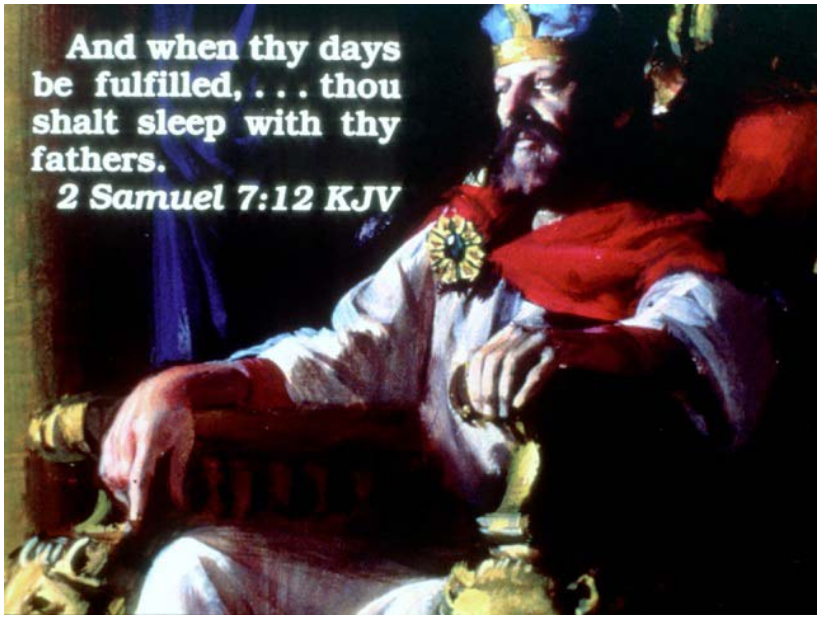
2- At death the person rests in the grave - he does not 'go somewhere'.

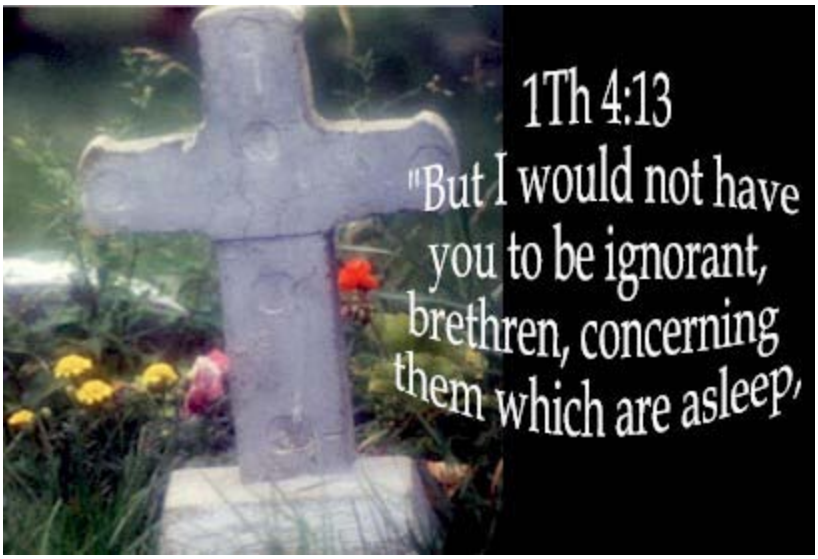


3, 4, 5, 6 - Death is a sleep.




Ps 13:3
Consider and hear
me, O LORD my God:
lighten mine eyes,
lest I sleep
the sleep of death;


And when thy days
be fulfilled, . . . thou
shalt sleep with thy
fathers.
2 Samuel 7:12 KJV



Here is a text that some use to say we have a conscious soul that 'goes somewhere' at death:

Genesis 35:18 And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin.

The word translated 'soul' here is 'Nepesh' It is used in 683 verses in the Old Testament. Here are some of the words translated from it: Creature; Life; Souls; Persons; One; Living thing; Beast; Person; Dead; Body etc.

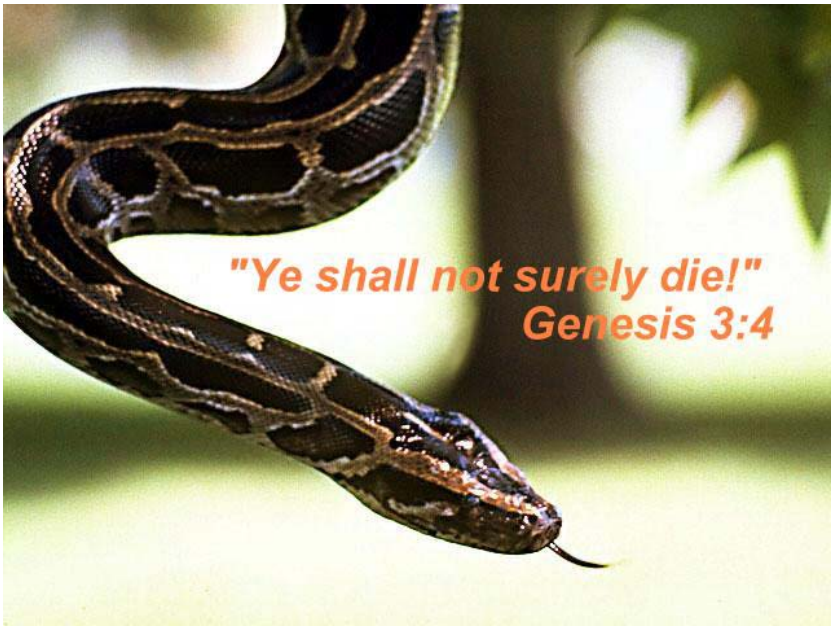
It refers most often to an individual living creature be it man or animal. It does not refer to something that has conscious life apart from the body.

The meaning of our text above is as we would say, 'As she breathed her last…', or, 'With her dying breath…'.

It does not prove in any way that some conscious entity left her as she died- and we have so many texts that say plainly the dead are unconscious until raised at the 2nd coming.

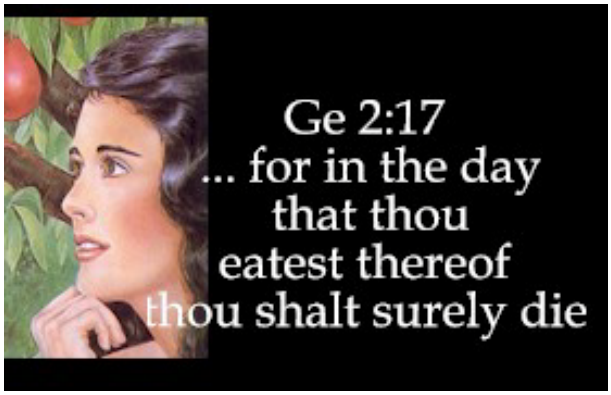
WHERE DID THE ERROR ORIGINATE?

Where then did mankind get this idea of “natural immortality”? It originated in ancient paganism. The Egyptians believed in the immortality of the soul, and gave the idea to the Greeks and Romans, who introduced it into Christianity in the third century A.D.

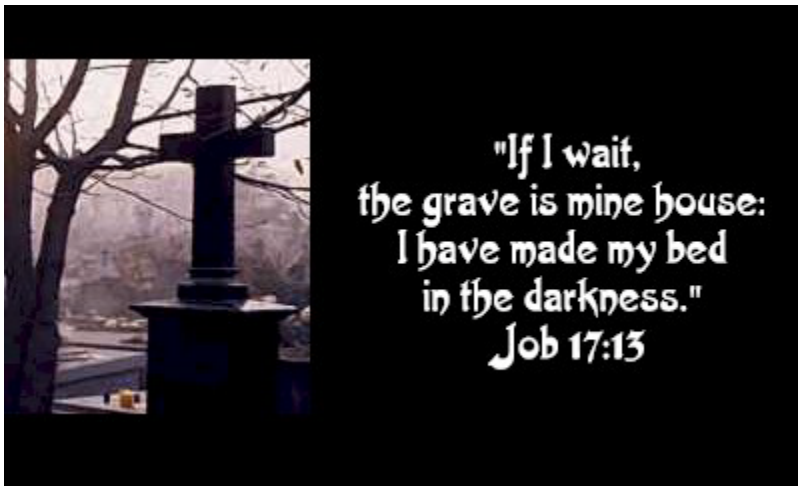


But, remember, this idea did not originate with the Egyptians, but with Satan. God originally said, “Thou shalt surely die” if you sin *(Gen 2:17).* But, to contradict it and encourage mankind to sin, Satan said, “Ye shall not surely die” if you sin *(Gen 3:4).* The teaching that sinners will not die came from the

devil. Eve sinned because of that lie. Millions since then have feared and worshiped the dead.



We know, from ancient Christian records, that almost no Christians accepted natural immortality until it was brought from paganism into the Christian church through liberal apostate Christians in Alexandria, Egypt, in the third century A.D. In later centuries, many returned to the Bible truth on this subject, including such men as Martin Luther, Isaac Watts, and John Milton.



If you visit ancient churchyards in England, you will find tombstones saying ‘Resting in Jesus’ right along side of others that say, ‘Gone to be with God’. Far better we are to cling to the Bible than the ideas of Paganism!

THE BLESSED HOPE!

“I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." Revelation 1:18

"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:12