

The State of the Dead

THE STATE OF THE DEAD

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“...for while you believe that the soul is created and yet is made immortal by God according to the doctrine of Plato...” “Josephus’ discourse to the Greeks concerning Hades.” Kregal publications Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA. 49501. (1981).

The ancient philosopher Plato and the ancient Egyptians believed that man was composed of a physical body that contained an immortal soul. And that this immortal soul survived the body at death. The question is “were they right?” The bible contains a lot of information about the state of the dead. To teach us what God says takes place at death we must look into the bible.

2 Timothy 3:15-17 *“And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”*



Here we have it clearly stated that the writings of the Old Testament are considered to be inspired by God and are therefore profitable for doctrine. The writings that we call the Old Testament was the bible that Jesus used and what Paul used to teach the truth. We can learn a lot on the state of the dead from the Old Testament as well as from the New Testament. The Apostle Paul makes no mention of the writings of the ancient Greek philosophers which were regarded by him as foolishness.

Immortality- When do we have it?

There are two views regarding the belief of man's immortality. One view known as 'Immortal-soulism' is the idea that man is naturally immortal therefore the experience of death is just a transition from one phase of existence to another. This view was held by the ancient Greek philosophers. The other view known as 'Conditionalism' is the idea that there is no part of man that is immortal and that at death man goes into an unconscious sleep. This view teaches that God has made man a candidate for immortality, both mind and body, and that the receiving of this immortal state is conditional upon man's accepting the Christian gospel.

In the book of Genesis we see that 'conditionalism' is taught. For it is in the Garden of Eden we see the consequences of man's rebellion against God and its impact on immortality.

Genesis 3:22-23 *“And the LORD God said, “the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever. So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden...”*

After man rebelled against God in the garden of Eden he was banished. He was prohibited from having access to the tree of life that was capable of making him immortal. This was to prevent man from becoming an immortal sinner. This prohibition would not make any sense if man was naturally immortal. The Apostle Paul declares that God desires to give man back what he lost in Eden.

Romans 1:6-7 *“God will give to each person according to what he has done. To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life.”*

Here we find Paul saying that immortality is something that has to be sought after. If we seek it God will give it to us. Why would man have to seek for immortality if he possessed it naturally? Clearly according to this man is not naturally immortal.

2 Timothy 1:10 *“This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”*

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Again we are told that immortality and the destruction of death has come about only because of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Man does not possess immortality naturally, it must be given to him through Jesus Christ. Immortality is only given to those who accept the gospel.

The ancient Greek philosopher Plato described the death of his teacher Socrates in an article he wrote called the '*Phaedo*'. In it he gives his arguments for the belief in the immortality of the soul. Plato believed that the mortal body was an outer garment that trapped an immortal soul. As long as we live the soul finds itself in a prison. Death was seen as a great liberator of the soul that released the soul from the bodies prison. If this is true the dead would then be eternally free to praise God face to face in heaven. This belief sounds interesting but the bible teaches something different.

1 Corinthians 6:19 “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you...”

Far from being a prison the bible says the human body is a temple of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 15:26 “The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”

Far from being a friend the bible describes death as being the last enemy that God will destroy.

Psalms 115:17 “The dead do not praise the Lord, nor any who go down into silence.”

Temples are made for the worship of God. In death none of us will be able to praise God because the body temple in which we praise God is gone. In death we are unconscious in our graves awaiting the resurrection of a new body temple. After God made Adam on the sixth day of creation He said all things were very good (Gen 1:31). This could not be the case if the body were a gaol that trapped the soul. And that it took the entrance of sin and death into the world to free us. This heathen philosophy is foreign to the Hebrew bible.



Socrates/Plato – Death is the release of the soul from the body prison by a friend.

Judeo/Christianity – Death is the temporary destruction of the soul and the body temple by an enemy.

The Soul – what is it?

The New Testament Greek word that is translated “soul” is the word '*psyche*'. The equivalent Old Testament Hebrew word is '*Nephesh*'. The meaning of '*psyche* / *nephesh*' falls into four categories.

- (1) **A living organism**. Used of man as a living being. (Gen 2:7) and of the lower animals as living creatures. (Gen 1:24)
- (2) **A person, or personality**. Acts 2:43 “Everyone (*psyche*) was filled with awe,...” Acts 3:23 “Anyone (*psyche*) who does not listen to him...”
- (3) **The physical life of man**. Which can be destroyed, saved or laid down.
- (4) **The inward man**. Mark 14:34 “My soul (*psyche*) is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death...” 1 Peter 1:22 “Now that you have purified yourselves (*psyche*) by obeying the truth...”

“Interestingly the bible does not teach that man has an immortal soul. The immortality of the soul doctrine can be read back into the bible only when one already believes that “soul” means an immortal something that can separate from the body at death and maintain a separate conscious existence. Neither '*nephesh*' nor '*psyche*' ever has any qualifying word's like 'immortal', 'everlasting', 'undying', or 'endless', or any modifier of equivalent meaning attached to them.” *Conditionalist Faith of our Fathers vol 1 p423-464*. Ed. L.E. Froom. Review and Herald, 1965.

Genesis 2:7 “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 (*Nephesh*) **living being**.” (NKJV)

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Genesis 2:7 “And the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul” (KJV)

A living soul (soul- *Nephesh* Hebrew). Modern English translations of the bible say a ‘living being’. The Hebrew word for Soul -“Nephesh” refers to the living being or to the person as a whole. Man is made up of the dust of the ground and the breath of life. These two together make a living being / soul. Nephesh is also used to describe the lives of animals. Eg.-

Genesis 1:24 “Then God said, 'Let the earth bring forth the living creature (*Nephesh*) according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its kind'; and it was so.”(NKJV)

Genesis 12:5 “And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls (*Nephesh*) that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go to the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.” (KJV)

Genesis 12:5 “Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother’s son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people (*Nephesh*) whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan.” (NKJV)

The souls that Abram had acquired in Haran were people that had joined their group along the way. The souls mentioned here are not ghosts or the spirits of the dead but living people.

Leviticus 17:12 “Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood.”(KJV)

Here we have it commanded that souls are forbidden to eat blood. Again a soul is a living person. Someone who is capable of eating food. A soul is not a spirit or a ghost. It is an entire living being, man or animal, flesh and bones.

Revelation 16:3 “ And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea”(KJV)

Here in the book of Revelation the lives of the lower animals are called souls. These sea creatures die as a result of a plague.

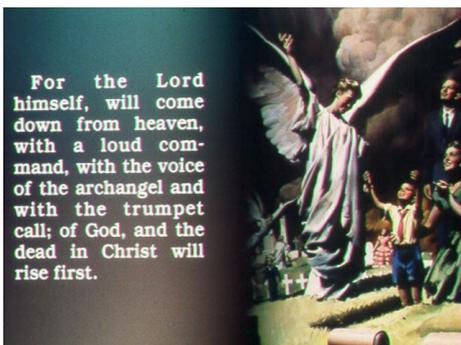
MAN IS MORTAL

Job 4:17 “Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can a man be more pure than his maker?”

Here we have an example of Hebrew poetry where the same thoughts are repeated twice using different words. In the above verse the same question is asked twice. The phrases are compared to get more understanding. Mortal = Man; Righteous = Pure; God = Maker. The bible describes man as being mortal. He is subject to death and his life will one-day cease to be. Righteousness is purity; and God is describes as being the Maker or Creator.

GOD ALONE IS IMMORTAL

1 Timothy 6: 14-16 “...He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen nor can see, to whom be honour and everlasting power. Amen.



The bible describes God as the only being in the universe that has immortality. If God alone is immortal then mortal man certainly is not.

Ezekiel 18:4. “ Behold all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine; the soul who sins shall die.

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Man has a soul but it is a **mortal soul**. No where in the Bible is the soul of man described as being immortal. It is mortal, subject to death. The soul who rebels against God will die.

The Apostle Paul describes the hope of Christianity. The gift of immortality.

1 Corinth 15: 51-53 “Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed - in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruption must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Immortality is a condition that man does not naturally possess but is something that must be put on at the resurrection of the dead at the Second Advent of Christ. The condition of death is described as a sleep.

Where did the doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul come from?

Genesis 3:1-4 “ Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’ ” And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said ‘You shall not eat of it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die. Then the serpent said to the woman, ‘***You will not surely die.***”

In the book of Genesis we find recorded the first sermon on the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Eve was told by God that to disobey results in the penalty of death. Satan the Devil under the guise of the serpent says ‘no’, God is wrong. You can disobey God and you will not die, implying that you cannot die because you are immortal. This is Satan’s first lie told on this world. However when man began to die Satan’s first lie was unmasked. So man had to be persuaded that physical death was not really death at all but simply a transition from one phase of existence to another. Satan’s next lie was to convince man that when the physical body died man actually continued to live in the form of a disembodied spirit. This second lie was necessary to sustain the first lie –“You will not surely die.”

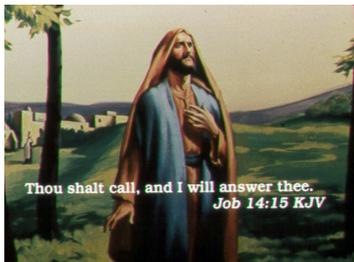
This false doctrine was a part of the religion of the Egyptians and then the Pagan Greeks. It entered the early Christian church in the second century AD through the church fathers who learned it from the Greeks. It then became a major doctrine of the Roman Catholic church and found its way into the Protestant churches during the sixteenth century reformation. From there it has become a major doctrine in nearly every Protestant church despite the fact that it is not taught in the Bible.

If man is mortal what takes place at death?

Ecclesiastes 9:10 “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going”

The grave is the destiny of us all. In the grave there is nothing, except death. It is not just the body that is in the grave either; it is “you” the whole person, mind and body. We find in the book of Job the teaching of death and the hope of the resurrection.

Job 14:12-15 “So man lies down and ***does not rise. Till the heavens are no more, they will not awake nor be roused from their sleep. Oh that you would hide me in the grave, That you would conceal me until your wrath is past, that you would appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait, till my change comes. You shall call, and I will answer You.***”



Under inspiration from God, Job says that man goes to his grave and does not rise until the end of the world. Man will rise in the resurrection at the Second Advent of Christ, when the heavens are no more. Job describes death as a sleep. It is not just the body that is in the grave either because Jobs says that it is ‘Me’, his body and mind that is in the grave awaiting the resurrection. Waiting until God calls him from his grave.

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Acts 2:29,34 *“Men and brethren let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day”.....“For David did not ascend to the heavens.”*

King David himself is asleep in his grave awaiting the resurrection. No distinction is made here between mind and body. It is David himself that is in the grave not just his body. This truth was also taught by Jesus Christ himself when He resurrected His friend Lazarus from his grave after he had been dead four days.

John 11:11-14 *“...Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up. Then His disciples said ‘Lord if he sleeps he will get well’ However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that he was speaking about taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus said to them plainly ‘Lazarus is dead’.*

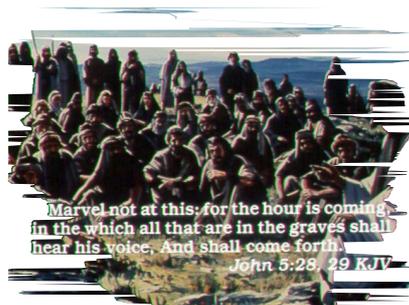
Here we have Jesus own understanding about the state of the dead. Jesus believed death to be a state of unconscious sleep.

John 11:41, 43-44 *“Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, ‘Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.... Now when he had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus come forth!” And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Loose him and let him go.”*



Here we have recorded the dramatic event of the resurrection of Lazarus, a friend of Jesus who had been dead for four days. Jesus cries with a loud voice for Lazarus to come forth from the grave. Lazarus’ body and mind were both dead in the grave, not just his body. Jesus did not say ‘Lazarus come back from heaven and re-enter your body’. He did not say ‘come back from purgatory and re-enter your body’. He did not say ‘come back from hell and re-enter your body. Jesus simply said Lazarus come forth from your grave because that is where Lazarus was, both mind and body. Interestingly Lazarus makes no mention at all about what it was like to have been dead for four days. That is because there was nothing to tell. He hadn't been anywhere. He was asleep in death.

John 5:28-29 *“ Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation.”*



Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth.
John 5:28, 29 KJV

Jesus is teaching about the great resurrection day when every one who has ever lived will one day get up out of their graves. They will hear his voice, the voice of Christ the life giver. It is not just the physical body that is in the grave it is the entire person mind and body. The mind and personality has to be dead in the grave for them to be able to hear the voice of the life giver from the grave

1 Corinthians 15:22-23 *“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming”*

The order of the resurrection according to Paul are that Christ was raised first, then the redeemed at the second coming. According to Paul none of the dead are alive until Christ returns at His second coming.

Doesn't the Bible say the spirit goes to heaven when a person dies?

Job 34:14-15 *“If He should set His heart on it, if He should gather to himself His Spirit and His breath, All flesh would perish together, And man would return to the dust.”*

Job 33:4 *“The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.”*

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It is said here that what gives all living beings life is the breath of God. If God were to take back His breath all living beings would die and return back to dust. The breath of God is also called the spirit of God .

Ecclesiastes 12:7 “Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.”

In describing what takes place at death King Solomon says that the body returns back to dust and the spirit returns back to God. This is the reversal of what took place when man was created. What is the Spirit that returns to God? The spirit is identical with the breath of life that God breathed into man when man was created. Breath and spirit are one and the same principle of life.

Job 27:3 “ All the while my breath (neshamah) is in me and the spirit (Ruach) of God is in my nostrils” (KJV)

Here it is clearly shown that the spirit of God and the breath of life are the same thing.



Job 27:3 “As long as my breath (neshamah) is in me, and the breath (Ruach) of God is in my nostrils.” (NKJV)

The translators of the NKJV bible understood that the breath of God and the Spirit of God are the same thing. That is why they translated the Hebrew word for spirit (*Ruach*) as 'breath'. As long as the breath of life or spirit remains in a man, the soul continues to exist and live. When the spirit departs he is no longer a living soul. The breath or spirit returns to God and man dissolves back into dust.



The spirit is not a soul. The spirit is never identified with soul. Spirit and soul are never confused in Scripture nor are they used interchangeably. At death the soul (man himself) goes to the abode of the dead while the spirit returns to God from whence it came.

Are the dead conscious?

Ecclesiastes 9:5-6 “For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, their hatred and their envy is now perished; nevermore will they have a share in anything done under the sun.”

King Solomon is clear that the dead don't know anything. On the day that a person dies his mind dies with him. His love, envy and hatred, all mental activities perish. They are gone. Those character traits do not continue to live on in another place of existence.

Job 14:10, 21. “But man dies and is laid away; indeed he breathes his last, and where is he?...His sons come to honour, and he does not know it; they are brought low, and he does not perceive it.”

When a man dies he is in an unconscious state. His sons come to pay their respects at his grave site but he does not know it. When his sons are brought low, ie when they die too, he does not perceive that either.

What about the Saints?

2 Timothy 4: 6-8 “For I am already brought poured out as a drink offering, and the time for my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

The Apostle Paul is writing his last letter as he knows he is about to die. He says that his departure from this life is at hand. And he looks forward to receiving a crown of righteousness from God. He will receive that crown at the same time that every one else who is saved receive their crowns. On 'that Day' a

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predetermined day. That day is after the Second Coming of Christ because crowns are given to all who have loved His appearing. Paul knew that like Job he would remain in the grave until the heavens are no more when at the resurrection he would be raised from his grave to see God.

1 Corinthians 15:3-6 “*For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.*”

The Apostle Paul here describes death as being a state of sleep. The twelve apostles and the five hundred brethren who saw Jesus alive after His resurrection from the dead were the members of the infant Christian church. Some of these people are now regarded as “saints” and are venerated by the modern church. People even pray to these people supposing that these saints are in heaven. But when Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthian church some of those saints had died, he says that they have 'fallen asleep'. It is not possible for the saints to hear your prayers because they like Paul are dead in their graves awaiting the resurrection.

In the Corinthian church some people were beginning to doubt the reality of the resurrection. Paul writes to these people instructing them that the resurrection is the backbone of the Christian faith.

1 Corinthians 15:13-19 “*But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is vain and your faith is also vain. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up - if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; and you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.*”

Paul regarded the resurrection of the dead to be of such importance that he linked it to the resurrection of Christ. If Christ is raised from the dead then we will be raised from the dead. If Christ was not raised from the dead then we will not be raised from the dead. He goes on to say that if there is no resurrection of the body from the grave in the same manner that Christ was raised from His grave then our Christian faith is worthless. And those who have fallen asleep or died in the faith of Christ have perished. Paul's major emphasis on the resurrection would not make any sense if we have an immortal soul that goes immediately to heaven at death.

John 13:36 - 14:1-4. “*Simon Peter said to Him. ‘Lord where are You going?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward. Peter said to Him. ‘Lord why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake’ Jesus answered him... Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”*

Peter asks Jesus the question ‘Lord, where are you going?’ Jesus tells His disciples that He is going to prepare places for them in His Father's house *in Heaven*. This is because God's people will live in Heaven. One day Christ will return to this earth to gather His people together to take them to His Father's house. Christ says that where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you shall follow me afterwards. And where I am going there you will be also. The intent of this passage is clear, that when Christ said that His disciple's would be where He is, He meant that they would be in Heaven where He is going. No Christian is in Heaven yet because Christ has not returned to this earth as promised to take us there.

Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul repeatedly taught that the Christians hope was the return of Christ when the resurrection of the dead would take place.

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What and where is Paradise?

The word Paradise occurs three times in the Bible. Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 12:2; Revelation 2:7

2 Corinthians 12:2,4 *“ I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago--whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows--such a one was caught up to the third heaven...⁴how he was caught up into Paradise*

Paul was caught up, in vision, to a place he called the third heaven which in verse four he expressly affirmed to be Paradise. The first heaven is the atmosphere; the second heaven is outer space and the third heaven is God's dwelling place..

Revelation 2:7 *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."*

Paradise or the third heaven is clearly where the tree of life is. And in Revelation 21&22 in the description of the New Jerusalem we read:-

Revelation 22:1-2 *“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ²In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month.”*

This tree of life grows in the midst of the paradise of God, the New Jerusalem, on the banks of the river of life, which proceeds from the throne of God. That is the paradise of the New Testament- the third heaven, where the tree of life is, and where God maintains His throne. Whoever, therefore goes to paradise goes into the presence of God Himself. Paradise is not under the earth in Hades, as some believe.

Christ's answer to the thief on the cross.

Luke 23:43 *“...Lord remember me when You come into Your kingdom. And Jesus said to him, ‘assuredly I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.’”*



Two thieves were taken to Calvary and were crucified along with Christ. One of the thieves said to Jesus ‘Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.’ He did not ask to go to heaven when he died. He asked to be remembered when Jesus returns to this earth with His Kingdom. An event that is still in the future. To this request Jesus replied ‘you will be with me in Paradise’. Many Christians infer that the thief and Jesus both went to Paradise that day. This cannot be because we know for sure that Jesus did *not* go to paradise that day. They were crucified on the preparation day that is a Friday. The next day was the seventh day Sabbath/Saturday which that year was the day after the passover. When a ceremonial passover sabbath and a seventh day sabbath occurred on the same day it was referred to as a high day.

John 19:31-33 *“Therefore, because it was the Preparation day [Friday] , that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.”*

The common method of ending crucifixion was crucifraction, the breaking of the bones of the legs. This prevented the victim from being able to push himself upwards to exhale, causing rapid suffocation. This was done because these evil religious men did not want the condemned to remain on the crosses on the Sabbath as it was viewed by them as Sabbath desecration.

Mark 15:43-45 *“Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate*

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marvelled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time.

Jesus died on the day of His crucifixion which was so unusual as to cause Pilate to investigate the matter due to astonishment. But we must answer the question. Did Jesus and the thief go to Paradise on the day of the crucifixion? The answer is found in the gospel of John. He records that on Sunday morning just after His resurrection from the dead Jesus is met in the garden by Mary who in astonishment clings to Him.

John 20:17 “...do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.”

Clearly neither Jesus nor the thief went into Paradise on the day of the crucifixion. On the third day after the crucifixion Jesus had not gone to Paradise to be in the Father's presence. How then do we understand the words of Christ when He said ‘*assuredly I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.*’ Simple, Jesus did not say this. The original Greek language that the New Testament was written in did not have punctuation marks. Punctuation marks were not added until the 9th century. Bible translators added punctuation where they saw fit. The added comma inserted in the wrong place makes the words of Jesus appear to say that both He and the thief went to paradise on the day of the crucifixion. The Bible translators should have put the comma in front of the word “today” not before it. What Jesus said was this:-

Luke 23:43 “*And Jesus said to him assuredly I say to you today, you will be with Me in Paradise*”

“I say to you today” was a common Hebrew idiom. This expression can be found in *Deuteronomy 30:18* “*I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed...*”. And *Acts 20:26* “*Therefore I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men.*” Jesus said “*I tell you today, you will be with Me in Paradise*”. And at the resurrection of the dead at the second advent of Christ the thief will be taken to Paradise as promised.

The Bibles used were The New King James Version published by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Copyright 1990. And the KJV published by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Copyright 1972.