

# **ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS ON THE SOUL SLEEP OF THE DEAD**

## **Part 2**

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*The following verses are examined in the light of the biblical doctrine of soul sleep*

- (1) Matthew 17:1-8 Moses and Elijah talk with Jesus
- (2) 2 Corinthians 12:1-4 Paul out of the Body
- (3) 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17 Jesus brings with him
- (4) Ephesians 4:8-10 He led captivity captive.
- (5) Hebrews 12:1-2 a great cloud of witnesses
- (6) Hebrews 12:23-24 the spirits of just men made perfect
- (7) Isaiah 14:4-11 Life in Sheol- the abode of the dead.
- (8) Ezekiel 32 Life in the grave.
- (9) Deuteronomy 32:22 hell fire for the living?
- (10) 2 Samuel 12:23 Go to be with the dead.
- (11) Isaiah 33:14 Do the lost live in everlasting burning?
- (12) Daniel 12:2 Rise to everlasting shame and contempt.
- (13) Genesis 35:18 Rachael's soul was departing for she was dying.
- (14) 1 Kings 17:21-22 a dead child is brought back to life.
- (15) Revelation 20:4-5 Souls are flesh and blood people.
- (16) Luke 8:51-55 The Resurrection of the Daughter of Jairus. Her spirit returned
- (17) Matthew 22:32 God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.
- (18) John 11:23-26 Believers in Jesus shall never die.

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### **Matthew 17:1-8**

#### **(1) Moses and Elijah in Heaven through a special resurrection and translation.**

*Matthew 17:1-8* “Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah’. While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!’ And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, ‘Arise, and do not be afraid.’ When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

The Bible makes it quite clear that there are a number of people who once lived on this earth who are now living in heaven. The Bible is also quite clear that there are only two ways to be taken to heaven: either by a physical resurrection from the dead where you literally get out of your grave, or by being translated bodily without dying. There are no exceptions.

The earliest example of a person being translated is Enoch. Enoch was the seventh generation from Adam (Jude14). Heb 11:5 “By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him.” see also Gen 5:23-24. Moses himself was the first to be raised from the dead. Romans 5:14 ‘...death reigned from Adam to Moses...’ death ceased to reign with the resurrection of Moses. He died and was buried in the land of Moab. (Deut 34:5-6). Just when he was raised from the dead we do not know but there is recorded in the epistle of Jude a struggle between Michael the Archangel and Satan over the body of Moses. The Apostle Jude in his letter quotes from an apocryphal book called ‘*The Assumption of Moses*’ where it describes a discussion between Michael and Satan as to whether the Archangel had the right to bring Moses from the grave.

Jude 9. “But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” NASB

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“Small portions of the Assumption of Moses still exist today, but Jude was quoting from a portion that is now lost. Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Didymus of Alexandria all claimed that Jude is referring to the Assumption of Moses.

In the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy we are told that God buried Moses in the land of Moab, “but no man knows his burial place to this day” (Deut. 34:5-6). So Moses died and was buried, but he shows up bodily at the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt. 9:1-8; Mt. 17:1-8; Lk. 9:28-36). This only makes sense if the body of Moses’ was resurrected and taken to heaven (Jude 9), later seeing him with Jesus at the Transfiguration.”

Elijah the Prophet also appears in bodily form with Jesus on the mount of Transfiguration. It's important to note that unlike Moses Elijah the prophet did not die. He was bodily transported to heaven alive in a fiery chariot. *2 Kings 2:11* “Then it happened, as they continued on and talked [Elijah and Elisha], that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.”

This would explain how Elijah appeared bodily at the Transfiguration. These two men represent the two classes of all humanity that make up the saved. Elijah represents the class translated without dying and Moses represents the class who die and later bodily resurrected from their graves.

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### **2 Corinthians 12:1-4** **(2) Paul's vision in or out of the body.**

*2 Corinth 12:1- 4* “...I will come to **visions and revelations** of the Lord: 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 caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows – how he was caught up to Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”

Paul's vision recorded here was evidently the most remarkable he had experienced. He was given a view of Paradise in the third heaven. It was so real, so alive and vivid; that he could not tell whether he had been bodily transported to Paradise or whether it was in reality merely a vision, presented before his mind by the Holy Spirit. If Paul were taken to Paradise alive, then he was not dead, and the experience would have no bearing on the question of consciousness in death. If it were a vision common to prophets throughout Old Testament times, neither would that prove consciousness in death, for Paul was alive at the time of the vision.

What does ‘out of the body’ mean? Modern immortal soulists believe that it is the immortal soul or spirit going out of the body – soul travel – and its existence for a time in a separate, conscious condition apart from the body. According to such a view the separation of the soul from the body takes place at death. If the expression ‘out of the body’ means that Paul's soul left his body and went to Paradise and back that would mean that Paul's soul went to heaven while his body lay dead, a corpse on the earth. Paul did not say that he died and was later resurrected. He simply stated that he had a vision – a super natural occurrence, a condition in which to his mind, controlled by the Holy Spirit during the time of vision, was presented with scenes so realistic that he seemed to be there in person.

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### **1 Thessalonians 4:14-17** **(3) Bring with Him**

*1 Thessalonians 4:14-17* “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will **bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus**. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will 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 thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

The phrase “bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus” does not imply that when Jesus comes again He will bring back with Him the souls of the saints who have been in heaven since their death. For we know from the Gospel of John that no one is in heaven until Jesus Christ himself returns to this earth to take them back there.

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*John 14:1-3* “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 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.

The Apostle Paul says that God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus, and then he explains what he means by that statement by describing the resurrection of the dead (those who sleep in Jesus) at the return of Christ. The Greek word ‘ago’ translated ‘bring’ means to *lead, lead along* or *take along* as a general leads. In Hebrews 13:20 the word ‘ago’ is rendered ‘brought’: -

*Heb 13:20* “Now the God of peace who brought (Gk: ago) up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great shepherd of the sheep...”

Jesus was brought (Gk: ago) up from the grave at His resurrection. So too will God, when Jesus returns, bring (Gk: ago) the sleeping saints from their graves at the resurrection. They will be led forth from their death sleep in their graves, and they will thus be led forth to meet their Lord, who returns with His holy angels.

To say as some do that Jesus brings immortal souls with Him from heaven so that they can be reunited with resurrected bodies makes absolutely no sense of the resurrection and is nothing more than reading pagan Greek Immortal-soulism into the Bible. Something the original writers never intended.

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### **Ephesians 4:8-10** **(4) He led captivity captive.**

***Ephesians 4:8-10*** “*When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.*’ (Now this, ‘He ascended’- what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

After Jesus was crucified He was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. This is what Paul means by ‘descended into the lower parts of the earth’. On the third day Christ was resurrected from the grave and then ascended into heaven in a physical form. But there was also a whole multitude of people who were resurrected from their graves when Jesus Himself was resurrected.

*Matt 27:50-53.* “And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. Then behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after the resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.”

When Jesus yielded up His spirit it simply means that He stopped breathing and died. At His resurrection many dead saints were resurrected with Him. These resurrected saints are a trophy and a testimony to the power of God and of the resurrection of Christ. They went into Jerusalem to report the resurrection of Christ at the same time that the Jewish priests and rulers were spreading lying reports saying that the body of Christ had been stolen. The priests even bribed the Roman soldiers who saw the resurrection, to admit to a capital offence by saying that the disciples had stolen the body of Christ while they were guarding it sleeping at there post. (See Matt 28:11-15).

Those resurrected ones were later taken to heaven in bodily form with Christ as a sample of all the saved that will be taken to heaven at the Second Advent of Christ. The apostle Paul when speaking of the return of Jesus to heaven says, “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive...” Ephesians 4:8. The saints who were held captive in death by Satan were recaptured by the greater power of Christ. At His ascension He led this recaptured group back to heaven. Thus there are a number of people who are in heaven with Christ. But the only way any of them have gotten there is by a special resurrection or translation. The rest of the saints are still in their graves asleep waiting for the resurrection at the return of Christ.

*1Thessalonians 4:16-17* “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and

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*remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord”.*

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## **Hebrews 12:1-2**

### **(5) Are these witnesses in Heaven?**

***Hebrews 12:1-2*** “*Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is before us. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...*”

All through the Bible we find witnesses to the principle that faith (believing and doing what God tells us) and faithfulness triumphs over every obstacle. In Hebrews chapter 11 the author talks about faith and gives numerous examples of Old Testament characters who believed and did what God told them. Since we have these examples of faithful people to encourage us let us also run the race of life that is set before us, keeping our focus on Jesus. These long dead people are described as a cloud of witnesses. This does not mean that they are alive as spirits in heaven watching us here on earth – ie Paganism, the doctrine of Plato. No, it means that the record of their lives is a witness to us testifying to the triumph of faith.

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## **Hebrews 12:23-24**

### **(6) Does Heaven contain the departed spirits of the dead?**

***Hebrews 12:23,24*** “*For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them any more. (for they could not endure what was commanded: And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot through with an arrow. And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, ‘I am exceedingly afraid and trembling) But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect.*”

In this passage the book of Hebrews describes the events that took place at Mount Sinai when Israel camped before the mountain as recorded in Exodus 19:16-25. This event describes the event when God himself descended on Mt Sinai and spoke the Ten Commandments. It was such a fearful event that Moses himself was terribly afraid. Mt Sinai is called ‘*the mountain that may be touched*’ simply because the people of God were near its physical presence. This is compared with the Heavenly Mt Zion that cannot be touched because we are not in heaven to touch it. **Mount Zion** is one of the mountains on which ancient Jerusalem was situated. This became the favourite poetical name for the city of Jerusalem. "The heavenly Jerusalem, or the New Jerusalem, mentioned here and in Galatians 4:26 and Hebrews 11:9-10, and described in Revelation 21:10-27 is the city of God, made by God, that will replace ancient Jerusalem. We Christians have not come to Mt. Sinai that can be touched but to the heavenly Mt.Zion, the New Jerusalem, that cannot be touched.

**The church of the firstborn, which are registered in heaven.** These are born-again Christians whose names have been written in the book of life. (See Luke10: 20, Philippians 4:3). The verse doesn't say that these people are in heaven. It just that their names are registered there.

**Spirits of just men made perfect.** Spirits does not necessarily mean disembodied spirits. These spirits are righteous men. Sometimes the word 'spirit' is associated with a physical body of both man and beast. eg. *Numbers 16:22* “*O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh...*” This clearly means all flesh, man and beast, not in a disembodied state. These Spirits of just men made perfect that inhabit the Heavenly Jerusalem may refer to those who were resurrected with Christ and taken to heaven with Him at his departure. They could also be the twenty-four elders mentioned in Revelation 4:4

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**Isaiah 14:4-11**

**(7) Life in Sheol – the abode of the dead. Gravedom?**

*Isaiah 14: 4-11. "...you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say: 'How has the oppressor ceased, the golden city ceased! The Lord has broken the staff of the wicked, The sceptre of the rulers; He who struck the people in wrath with a continual stroke, He who ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted and no one hinders. The whole earth is at rest and quiet; They break forth into singing. Indeed the cypress trees rejoice over you, And the cedars of Lebanon, saying, 'Since you were cut down, no woodsman has come up against us.' Hell from beneath is excited about you, to meet you at your coming; it stirs up the dead for you, all the chief ones of the earth; it has raised up from their thrones, all the kings of the nations. They all shall speak and say to you: 'Have you also become as weak as we? Have you become like us? Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, And the sound of your stringed instruments; The maggot is spread under you, and worms cover you.'"*

This passage in the Old Testament is used to try to prove that the dead in their graves are infused with life. And the grave is a place of activity and life rather than silent death where decomposing bodies are turning back to the dust from whence they came. This passage is a taunt against the King of Babylon who has died and now is in his grave. The grave is seen as the great equaliser. All the riches and the splendour of Kings have turned to nothing. As the king of Babylon enters the grave, the other deceased kings that were killed by the king of Babylon taunt him saying you have now become like us, food for worms and maggots. This gives the impression that the grave is full of life. But the cypress trees are also rejoicing over the downfall of the king of Babylon. The cedars of Lebanon talk and say 'since you were cut down no woodsman has come against us'.

It is obvious that the story is all imagery not to be taken literally. The dead being infused with life, lying on maggots, as food for worms while in their graves is about as literal as talking cedars and singing cypress trees.

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**Ezekiel 32**

**(8) Life in the Grave?**

*Ezekiel 32:21 "The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of hell [sheol] with those who help him: They have gone down, they lie with the uncircumcised, slain by the sword" NKJV*

*Ezekiel 32:21 From within the realm of the dead [sheol] the mighty leaders will say of Egypt and her allies, 'They have come down and they lie with the uncircumcised, with those killed by the sword.' 22 "Assyria is there with her whole army; she is surrounded by the graves of all her slain, all who have fallen by the sword. 23 Their graves are in the depths of the pit and her army lies around her grave. All who had spread terror in the land of the living are slain, fallen by the sword. NIV*

*Ezekiel 32:30 "All the princes of the north and all the Sidonians are there; ...31 "Pharaoh—he and all his army—will see them and he will be consoled for all his hordes that were killed by the sword, declares the Sovereign Lord. NIV*

The word translated 'hell' is the Hebrew word 'Sheol' which means 'the grave' or the 'realm of the dead'. The context indicates 'the grave' is the focus of attention here. These verses mentions the fact that the dead lie (in their graves) slain by the sword. From the realm of the dead ie grave, the mighty leaders will say..." indicating that they are speaking from their graves, not from the mythical pagan Greek place of eternal fire. Pharaoh and his dead Egyptian army are said to be consoled when they see their dead enemies in the graves with them. It's obvious that this is a parable not to be taken literally. Else the dead aren't really dead at all but alive lying in their graves and are able to talk to one another. This passage is the same as Isaiah 14:4-11 using symbolic imagery.

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**Deuteronomy 32:22**

**(9) Hell fire?**

***Deut 32:22 “For a fire is kindled in my anger, and shall burn to the lowest hell; It shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains. I will heap disasters upon them; I will spend My arrows against them. They shall be waisted with hunger,...*”**

In this verse God is describing what He will do in the future to unfaithful Israel. The fire here is a symbol of great calamities or a flaring up of Gods anger. The lowest hell is ‘Sheol’ the grave. Sheol is always connected with death. It means ‘the grave’ in contrast to ‘a grave (Heb qeber) or burial place’ When the wrath of God comes it will consume the earth and her increase ie, her produce, meaning crops and harvests. It will devastate Israel completely and they shall be waisted with hunger. The punishment described here is punishment for the living not the dead. This verse does not support the pagan Greek belief in an eternally burning hell for the punishment of disembodied spirits.

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**2 Samuel 12:23**

**(10) Go to be with the dead?**

***2 Sam 12:23 “But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.”***

In this verse King David of Israel mourns the death of his newborn son. This was the son born to Him by Bathsheba. It is inferred by some that this verse teaches that the child is alive in another sphere of existence in the spirit world because David said ‘I shall go to him but he shall not return to me’. This verse does not teach the pagan Greek doctrine of the immortality of the soul. There is not one verse in the Bible that teaches that man has an immortal soul. The Hebrews often spoke of the dead as ‘sleeping with their fathers’. David is simply saying that he will one day join his son in death, but that his son cannot return to the land of the living.

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**Isaiah 33:14**

**(11) Do the lost live in everlasting fire?**

***Isaiah 33:14 “The sinners in Zion are afraid; Fearfulness has seized the hypocrites; Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He who walks righteously ... bread will be given him, his water will be sure.***

This passage refers to the desolation of Palestine by the Assyrians. Because of the threatened desolation the sinners in Zion, ie Jerusalem, are afraid. It does not refer to the destiny of the unsaved nor does it refer to the Pagan idea of an eternally burning hell. The devouring fire and the everlasting burnings refers to the devastation by fire and sword of the invading Assyrian army. The question is asked ‘*who will dwell with*’ not ‘*in*’ the devouring fire. The answer is given: the righteous will be able to dwell with everlasting burnings. Verse 16 says of the righteous that his bread will be given him and his water will be sure. In other words he need not fear starvation during the impending crisis. The verse refers to present punishments on earth, not to the future day of judgement when God will destroy sin and sinners forever.

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**Daniel 12:2**

**(12) Everlasting Punishment?**

***Daniel 12:2 “And many who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to everlasting shame and contempt.”***

This verse refers to the resurrection at the Second Advent of Christ. It is rather strange that people who believe in consciousness in death use this verse to prove their belief when it is specifically talking about those who sleep in the grave. Here the saved are raised from their sleepy graves to receive the gift of immortality. While there are a select few of the wicked who are raised to see Christ return. Christ himself mentioned this group when on trial before the Sanhedrin.

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**Matt 26:63-64** "... Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God! Jesus said to him, 'It is as you say. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.

Jesus is saying that at the Second Advent when He returns the rulers who condemned Him to death will be raised to life to see Him in glory. This is also taught in the Revelation.

**Rev 1:7** "Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, even they who pierced Him and all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen."

The ones who crucified Him will be raised to see him return also. The resurrected wicked who are raised to life by Christ to receive their punishment are spoken of as receiving everlasting shame and contempt. This everlasting contempt is not the same as everlasting life burning in hell. This verse in Daniel does not teach eternal torment. After the wicked are executed or put to death by Christ they remain dead forever never to be raised again. The penalty for sin is eternal death. The method of execution is by fire. Death is eternal and the shame and contempt placed upon the wicked dead will also be eternal.

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### **Genesis 35:18**

#### **(13) Rachael's soul was departing for she was dying.**

**Gen 35:18.** "And so it was, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin."

Rachael, the wife of Jacob, died during childbirth. The departure of her soul indicated that she was dying. Note that her 'soul' is **not** called an 'Immortal soul'. There is nothing about human beings that is immortal. The word translated 'soul' is the Hebrew word 5315 'Nephesh'. This word means 'life'. Several bible translations recognise this.

NIV - As she breathed her last...

Knox - ...her life was ebbing away in her pangs...

Moffat - As her life went from her (for she died)...

This hebrew word 5315 'Nephesh' is used also used to describe the lower animals. Genesis 1:24 "...let the earth bring forth the living creature (Nephesh) according to its kind." Genesis 9:4 "But flesh with the life of it (Lit. its soul-Nephesh), *which is the blood of it, you shall you eat.*" Here we see that 'Nephesh' is used to describe the life force that is in the blood of an animal. Rachael was dying and her life was ebbing out of her.

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### **1 Kings 17:21-22**

#### **(14) A child is brought back to life**

**1 Kings 17:21-22.** "And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the Lord and said, 'O Lord my God, I pray, let this child's soul [Nephesh] come back to him.' Then the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived."

Man has a soul; he does not have an immortal soul. The word translated 'soul' is the Hebrew word 5315 'Nephesh' and it means the life or the creature as a living being. Other bible translations say: -

1 Kings 17:21-22 "Then he stretched himself upon the child three times, and called to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, I pray You, let this child's life [Nephesh] return to him." 22 The LORD heard the voice of Elijah, and the life of the child returned to him and he revived." NASB

1Kings 17:22 NIV ...the boy's life returned to him, and he lived  
Moffat...the child's life came back and he revived.  
Knox ... the boy's life returned to him, and he revived.

This verse does not teach consciousness in death. Nor does it teach that man has an immortal soul/life.

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**Revelation 20:4-5**

**(15) Souls are flesh and blood people**

*Rev 20:4-5 “And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgement was committed to them. And I saw the **souls of those who had been beheaded** for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. (But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.) This is the first resurrection.”*

Here John is given a view of souls in heaven that had remained loyal to God during the last days. These people had not received the mark of the beast and died a martyr’s death. These souls are not disembodied spirits but are flesh and blood people. These souls had been beheaded. How can a disembodied spirit have its head chopped off? These souls were resurrected from their graves at the Second Advent of Christ – the first resurrection. There are two resurrections separated by 1000 years. All of God’s people are resurrected at the Second Advent of Christ. Everyone else is resurrected at the end of the 1000 years. In 1 Peter 3:18-20 the Apostle Peter uses the words ‘eight souls’ to describe the eight people who were aboard Noah’s ark and survived the flood. The word ‘Soul’ is also used by John here to described flesh and blood people.

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**Luke 8:51-55**

**The Resurrection of the Daughter of Jairus**

**(16) her spirit returned, and she arose immediately.**

*Luke 8:51-55 “When He came into the house, He permitted no one to go in except Peter, James, and John, and the mother of the girl. Now all wept and mourned for her; but He said ‘Do not weep; **she is not dead, but sleeping.**’ And they laughed Him to scorn, knowing that **she was dead.** But He put them all out, took her by the hand and called, saying, ‘Little girl, arise,’ Then her **spirit** returned, and she arose immediately. And He commanded that she be given something to eat.”*

The Greek word for ‘spirit’ is G4151 ‘*pneuma*’, it where the word pneumatic tyre comes from, and it means ‘wind’ or ‘breath’. It’s from the word “pneo” meaning to ‘to blow’ or ‘to breathe’. Here we see Jesus raising a dead girl from what Jesus calls the sleep of death. In every instance in the new testament where the word ‘Pneuma’ is used it describes intelligence. It is used of God as the Holy Spirit. It is used of demons as unclean spirits. It is used to describe holy angels. For human beings it also describes the conscious intelligence in our minds. In Eph 4:23 the Apostle Paul speaks of being ‘renewed in the **spirit** [*pneuma*] of your mind’. Because this girl was dead she was in a state of unconscious sleep and had no intelligence, meaning that her thought processes had stopped when her body and brain ceased to function. When Jesus called her back to life her body and brain began to function normally again and her spirit/intelligence returned to its normal state. By saying that her spirit returned Luke the author is saying that she began to breathe again, her consciousness and intelligence returned and she immediately got up. Both Matthew and Mark record this event yet they make no mention whatever about an immortal soul or consciousness in death.

*Matt 9:25 “But when the crowd had been sent out, He entered and took her by the hand, and the girl got up”*

*Mk 5:41-42 “Taking the child by the hand, He said to her, “Talitha kum!” (which translated means, “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”). 42 Immediately the girl got up and began to walk, for she was twelve years old. And immediately they were completely astounded.”*

By raising her from the dead, Jesus proved three things:

- (1) Death is not a good state but a bad state.
- (2) Christ is more powerful than death
- (3) The dead sleep until the resurrection.

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**Matthew 22:32**

**(17) "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."**

***Matt 22:32 "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."***

In Matthew 22:23-32, Mark 12:18-27, and Luke 20:27-38, we have an account of a discussion Jesus had with a group of Sadducees, who scripture explains, did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. They ask Jesus a question about a widow who marries 7 brothers in succession after each brother dies. The Sadducees presume that they have asked Jesus an impossible question, because they assume that after any supposed resurrection, the woman would be guilty of bigamy by having seven husbands. The story is as follows: -

***Luke 20:27-38 "Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, saying: 'Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother, Now there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her as wife, and he dies childless. Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children and died. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife.' And Jesus answered and said to them, 'The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are accounted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are the sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. Now even Moses showed in the burning bush passage that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him."***

Notice that the subject deals with the Sadducees denial of a resurrection (the power of God to raise the dead) and their lack of knowledge of scripture. The Sadducees believed in the writings of Moses. So they use Moses' writings to deny the doctrine of the resurrection. Jesus shows them that they are wrong for even Moses believed in the resurrection.

In the above passage, to prove that even Moses believed in the resurrection, Jesus quotes from (Exodus 3:6) *"I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"* and then the comment is made that *"God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."* It is this quote that is used by Jesus to prove the bible doctrine of the resurrection. Not to prove Plato's doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

Some Christians point to the phrase *"God is not the God of the dead, but of the living"* as proof that people never really die, but rather their "soul" continues to live on after death. However it is clear from the above passage that the issue in question is *God's power to raise the dead from the grave in a resurrection, something the Sadducees clearly rejected.* The question does *not* address who's wife the woman would be after she is dead, while still in the grave, but rather *after* her resurrection, because the Sadducees assumed death to be final and irreversible. Christians who cite these passages to support the Pagan belief of the immortality of the soul (purgatory etc.) are clearly taking the verses out of context, and reading into them what isn't there. The dead are in their graves, sleeping, awaiting their resurrection at the last trumpet. At the resurrection they will put on incorruption, immortality, but until then they rest in the grave.

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**John 11:23-26**

**(18) Believers in Jesus shall never die**

***John 11:23-26 " <sup>23</sup>Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." <sup>24</sup>Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." <sup>25</sup>Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. <sup>26</sup>And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?<sup>27</sup>She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."***

The unbiblical pagan Greek idea that man has an immortal soul and is conscious in death is supposed to apply to all men. That is, all men, saved and unsaved, are said to have an immortal soul not just Christians. But Jesus in the above verses is saying that only those who believe in Him are the ones who will never die. Believers will not die but the unbelievers will die. Clearly He is not teaching the Greek idea that all men have an immortal soul. He is teaching about the resurrection. He then proves what He says by resurrecting Lazarus from his grave.

## ***ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS ON THE SOUL SLEEP OF THE DEAD***

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***"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die he shall live"***

He may die in this life but he will live again because Jesus will resurrect him from his grave at the last day. Only those Christians who are alive to see Jesus return at the last day are the ones who will not die.

***"And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die."***

In verse 25 we are told that believing Christians may die. Now in verse 26 we are told that believing Christians will *never* die. Is this a contradiction? Not if we understand that '*never die*' here refers to the second death that no true Christian will experience. To say that Jesus is teaching 'immortal-soulism' here is to say that He taught the same lie that satan taught in the garden of Eden when he lied to Eve by saying "you will not surely die". (Genesis 3:4)

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Most of the information in this Bible study comes from the work "The Conditionalist Faith of our Fathers" vol 1, Ed, Leroy Edwin Froom. Review and Herald publishing company. Washington USA. 1966.

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