



THE BIBLE STANDS

*The Bible stands though the hills may tumble,
It will firmly stand when the earth shall crumble;
I will plant my feet on its firm foundation,
For the Bible stands.*

Bible Facts about the Other Side of Death

A well known American said to his medical advisers when he was eighty years old, "I'll give you a million dollars for each year you can add to my life,"

Louis XIV was the wealthiest king France ever had. One day, when he asked what was in a building he could see from his palace window, one of his courtiers replied. "Sir, that is the Church of Saint Denis where your royal ancestors lie buried." The king immediately gave orders to build another palace--the fabulous Versailles--southwest of Paris, so he would no longer see that building.

What is death? What is on the other side of death? The Bible has answers. Here they are:

WHY IS THERE DEATH?

When God made Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, did He plan that this sinless pair, created in His own image, should die? No, it was not His plan. God created man to live. But God did not purpose that man should live if he sinned.

1. Did God warn Adam and Eve ahead of time that they would die if they sinned?

Genesis 2:17--"Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

As soon as man sinned, he would begin aging, dying, and committing more sins.

2. Satan, in the form of a serpent, lied to Eve. What did he tell her?

Genesis 3:4--"Ye shall not surely die."

Eve believed Satan instead of believing God, and ate the fruit. Adam joined her in disobedience. No sin is small; each is quickly followed by more.

3. What did God tell them?

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

God's sentence on sin is death. To partake of the Tree of Life after that, would mean eternal life in sin. But God did not let them do that--because the sentence of disobedience was death.

4. How did God prevent them from becoming immortal sinners?

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

Because of sin, God has given each person a brief, probationary life, now of seventy or so years, 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 the world, and death by sin."

IS MAN IMMORTAL?

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

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."

5. Is man immortal?

Job 4:17--"Shall mortal man be more just . . . than his Maker?"

6. Who only has immortality?

1 Timothy 6:15.16--[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 Timothy 1:17.
3. God only has immortality. 1 Timothy 6:16.
4. Man must seek for immortality (Romans 2:7).
5. Immortality is brought to light through the gospel. 2 Timothy 1:10.
6. Immortality will be bestowed upon those who are redeemed at the Second Coming of Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:51-55.

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

HOW WAS MAN CREATED?

7. How was man created?

Genesis 2:7--"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."

Let us follow the steps:

First, God made Adam's body from the elements in the dust of the ground.

Second, God breathed, into Adam's nostrils, the breath of life. There is no indication here of an "immortal spirit," and there never was a "spirit Adam." God simply breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life and he became alive--mortally live. Remember Genesis 3:22-24, quoted earlier. It was the Tree of Life that gave continuing immortality, and mankind had been barred from eating of it

Third, "man became a living soul." Body *plus* breath of life equals a living soul. Notice that God did not breath a living soul into man, but He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man then *became* a living soul.

By itself Adam's body had no life, and no other created being could give it to him. But God could give him life, which He did. Adam's body, although perfect in every way, was lifeless--until God breathed that life into him.

But the warning had been given him that if he sinned, he would die. All around us, we see that men have life, but then they get old and die.

Before he was made. Adam had no living soul. It came as a result of the union of his body and the breath of the "spirit of life", for "the body without the spirit is dead." James 2:26.

WHAT ABOUT SOUL AND SPIRIT IN THE BIBLE?

The Hebrew and Greek words from which we translate our English words, soul and spirit, are found some 1,700 times in the Bible. Actually, the word, soul, as used in the Bible, does not always have exactly the same meaning. The same holds true for the word, spirit.

But this we know very clearly: not once in the 1,700 places in the Bible, where the original words for soul and spirit are used,--is either of them said to be immortal, eternal, never dying, imperishable, indestructible, everlasting, or having immortality. In addition, not once are the dead represented as being capable of a conscious existence apart from the body.

WHAT ABOUT THE ANIMALS?

8. Do animals have "the breath of life?"

Genesis 7:15--"They went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life."

So it is clear that animals also possess the breath of life, "the breath of the spirit of life." Genesis 7:22, margin. Neither animals nor man are immortal; they both die. Genesis 7:21-22: Revelation 16:3.

9. Are animals "living souls"?

Genesis 1:30--"To every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life."

The word here for "life" is "living soul" in the original Hebrew (see Genesis 1:30. margin).

So, according to the Bible, animals have living spirits and souls as man does.

Is man then a mere animal? No, indeed. Adam was the masterpiece of creation. Man is "fearfully and wonderful made" (Psalm 139:14), "only a little lower than the angels." Psalm 8:5.

CAN WE THEN BE SAVED AND HAVE ETERNAL LIFE?

How tragic it is that man, created with such high privileges and opportunities, fell into sin--and became subject to death! But God had a plan to save him.

10. What was God's plan to save man from sin?

John 3:16--"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Thank God for His inexpressible Gift! Through humble, sincere repentance for the sins which crucified Jesus Christ, and faith in Him, we can be accepted by the God of heaven and enabled by grace to obey all that He asks of us in His inspired Writings!

2 Timothy 1:10--"Jesus Christ hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

1 John 5:12--"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son hath not life."

Is not that a most wonderful encouragement! There is hope for us! Through His enabling grace, we can be forgiven our sins and kept from falling back into them.

It takes the body and spirit of life--together--to make man a living soul. But it is not, by nature, an immortal soul. There is no such thing as a separate soul which can live apart from the body. Job refers to the breath of God within him: "The spirit of God is in my nostrils." Job 27:3.

Paul writes, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thessalonians 5:23. The body and spirit of life make man a living soul. Christ came to save the entire man. To do this, we must let Him sanctify all there is of us--body, soul, and spirit.

It is the way of the cross which leads to immortality. Let us follow Jesus in His sufferings, wherever it may lead. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Revelation 2:10.

By giving our life and all we have and are to Jesus--we will gain eternal life. "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it." Matthew 16:25. Jesus says to us, "Come, follow Me. Choose rather to die--than to sin." Through Christ, follow the narrow path to heaven and immortality.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A MAN DIES?

What happens after death? God has given us this information in His Book, the Bible.

11. What happened when man was created?

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 living soul."

At that moment, man became a living, thinking, active being. Before then, he had not really existed.

During life, that breath remains in him. The breath of the Almighty hath given me life." Job 33:4. 'The spirit of God is in my nostrils." Job 27:3.

12. What happens when a man dies?

But when a man dies, the opposite of what happened at creation occurs:

Ecclesiastes 12:7--Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

The breath of life departs and the body returns to the ground.

First, the breath of life departs. The "spirit of life," which God gives to all men, leaves that person.

Psalms 146:4--"His breath goeth forth."

Ecclesiastes 12:7--"The spirit shall return to God who gave it."

Second, when the breath of life leaves it, the body returns to the ground.

Psalms 146:4--"His breath goeth forth, he returneth to His earth."

Ecclesiastes 12:7--"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was."

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

Psalm 104:29--"Thou hidest Thy face. they are troubled: Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust." (Also Job 34:14-15).

Job 17:13-16--"Our rest together is in the dust" (Also Job 3:11-18).

Isaiah 26:19--They "dwell in the dust."

Isaiah 38:18-19--"For the grave cannot praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee: --The living, the living, he shall praise Thee, as I do this day."

Acts 2:29. 34--"Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day . . For David is not ascended into the heavens."

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.

IS MAN CONSCIOUS AFTER DEATH?

13. Is a man awake after he dies?

Psalm 146:4--"His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."

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."

14. Do his feelings and emotions cease also?

Ecclesiastes 9:6--"Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished."

When a man dies, his thoughts and knowledge cease. His feelings and emotions cease also.

For any given man, his thinking and feeling did not exist until God breathed life into him. When the electric current is turned off, the bulb is still there but the light is gone. At death, everything stops.

WHAT IS DEATH?

Death is like sound sleep. That is what the Bible teaches. The dead are entirely unconscious. Death is called "sleep" fifty-four times in the Scriptures.

Few passages are more obvious than John 11:11-14, where Jesus carefully explains to His disciples that death is really a sleep.

5. How did Jesus describe death?

John 11:11-14--"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep . . Howbeit Jesus spake of his death . . Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead."

When Stephen was stoned to death, he "fell asleep." Acts 7:60. Christ is called the first fruits of them that slept (1 Cor. 15:20); and in verse 51 Paul says. "We shall not all sleep." Elsewhere, he writes that he would not have them ignorant concerning them which are asleep.

1 Thessalonians 4:13--"I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep [dead]." In verse 14, he speaks of them as asleep in Christ, and explains, in verse 16, that this means "dead in Christ."

16. Is there no awareness of anything in this sleep of death?

Psalm 6:5--"For in death there is no remembrance of Thee."

Psalm 115:17--"The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence."

Ecclesiastes 9:5--"The dead know not anything."

Job 14:21--"His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them."

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 AD.

But remember, this idea did not originate with the Egyptians, but with Satan. God originally said. "Thou shalt surely die" if you sin. Genesis 2:17. But, to contradict it and encourage mankind to sin, Satan said, "You shall not surely die" if you sin. Genesis 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.

But, as we have learned, the truth is that, to prevent sinners from becoming immortal, God barred the way to the Tree of Life as soon as man sinned. Genesis 3:22-24.

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 AD. In later centuries, many returned to the Bible truth on this subject, including such men as Martin Luther, Isaac Watts, and John Milton. Is there no solution to the problem of death? Yes, there is! It is acceptance of Christ and the coming resurrection!

WHAT IS THE PROMISE OF THE RESURRECTION?

Christ told His disciples that He would be raised to life (Matthew 16:21), and afterward He was. Luke 24:39. The angel declared, "He is risen!" Mark 16:6. A wonderful Bible promise has been given to God's children that, just as Christ rose from the dead to life, so those who believe in Him shall also rise to life!

"All that are in the graves shall . . . come forth." John 5:28-29. "Christ . . . the first fruits of them that slept." 1 Corinthians 15:20. "Afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." Verse 23.

17. What is the truth about the resurrection?

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18--"The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

18. Will Paul and all God's children receive their rewards then?

2 Timothy 4:8--"Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

The resurrection from the dead is the real hope of those who, when their beloved die, "sorrow not, even as others." Verse 13. Christians who live to see the second coming of Christ will go to heaven "together with" the resurrected righteous. They will not prevent [phthano in the Greek--go before] them which are asleep. Verse 15.

The promise is that those who die, will not go to heaven before those who live to see Christ return in the clouds of heaven. "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Hebrews 11:40. Even a thousand years after the death of David, Peter said he was still not in heaven:

Acts 2:34--"For David is not ascended into the heavens."

Indeed, Paul said that if there is not that resurrection,--then no Christians will go to heaven, and that is the end of it all! 1 Corinthians 15:16-18. Thank God that there will be a resurrection of the dead!

1 Corinthians 15:16, 18--"For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised . . . Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished."

John 5:28--All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth."

An actual, bodily resurrection will occur at that time.

Job 19:25-26--I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

For the people of God who have died, the sleep of death will end at the resurrection, and, when raised to life, they will be caught up together with the living righteous to meet their Lord in the air--to be forevermore with Him.

19. will our bodies be changed when Christ returns?

Philippians 3:21--"Christ] shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."

Man originally came from the dust of the earth, and, at the resurrection, he will arise from the dust again.

Man was originally created "a little lower than the angels." Psalm 8:5. But, after the Second Advent, it will be said of the redeemed:

Luke 20:36--"Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels: and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." At the Second Advent of Christ, He will raise His own from the dead. Oh, glorious promise! Wonderful assurance!

WHAT WILL THE RESURRECTION BE LIKE?

Death is an enemy (1 Corinthians 15:26), but, on behalf of God's faithful ones, it will be conquered at the Second Coming of Christ when He raises His beloved children from the dead. At that time, they will give a shout of victory over death!

20. When will we have victory over the grave and death?

1 Corinthians 15:51-58--"Behold, I shew 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 trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

"The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

HOW CAN WE RECEIVE THAT LIFE?

Sin brings death, not life. "The wages of sin is death." Romans 6:23. In Christ alone is salvation; in Him alone is life!

Acts 4: 12--"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Christ is the pathway to life. "I am the way, the truth, and the life." John 14:6. It is only through Christ that we can have that life. "That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16.

John 10:27-28--"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand."

21. Who only can give us eternal life?

1 John 5:11--"This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."

22. What must we do to receive that life?

1 John 5:12--"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

John 5:24--"He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

John 6:53--"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."

We receive life by accepting and obeying Christ. Rejoice in the fact! There is life only in Christ, but in Christ we can have that life! In view of such a destiny, it is our solemn, but happy, duty to give our lives to God, and serve Him all our earthly days.