

CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
OCTOBER 31 2026

the deadly lie

Scripture Story: Genesis 3:1-5; Psalm 146:4; Isaiah 38:18, 29; Revelation 16:13, 14.
Commentary: *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire*), chapters 33, 34.
Key Text: Psalm 146:4.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

The subject of death is one of the most controversial issues in the world. There are many people that view the soul as immortal; some don't believe in an afterlife at all; some believe in the end-time resurrection; and some aren't quite sure what they believe.

Today's lesson will give us more insight on what the Bible says happens at death. It will also show how belief in an immortal soul can lead to cultic things such as spiritualism. Death is not limbo, hell, heaven, or purgatory. It is, simply put, "nonexistence." The soul does not live on outside the body; it does not have thoughts or a personality; it is simply disintegrated. Bodies don't *have* souls, bodies *are* souls. All throughout the Bible we have seen examples of this. Nowhere in the Bible does it attribute the soul to anything that is conscious after death. Many believe the idea of the immortal soul was thought up by ancient Greek philosophers. Plato was definitely a big believer in this teaching. He referred to the body as a husk, the shell which the soul leaves upon death. However, the Bible clearly contradicts this belief. "For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 9:4-6, KJV).

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand what happens when death occurs. *(Know)*
- Be more conscious of the fact that the majority of Christians don't share the same belief and need to hear it. *(Feel)*
- Be willing to share this truth with others. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

The Holy Scriptures, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 1

"The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration. The inspired authors spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to humanity the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the supreme, authoritative, and the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the definitive revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history" (Ps. 119:105; Prov. 30:5, 6; Isa. 8:20; John 17:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Heb. 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20, 21).

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

The idea of the immortal soul is constantly circulated through our society today. You see it in movies and hear about it in music—and even some nonreligious people have tended to lean toward the idea of soul immortality because it's been so engrained into their minds from the media.

The good news is that the Bible reveals the truth about the state of human beings after death. "God has given the world sufficient light to enable them to discover the snare."[1]

How did Jesus describe death? (sleep). In the Bible, death is referred to as an unconscious sleep until the resurrection day, when Jesus will call to life all those believers in Him who died (see John 11:11-14; Acts 7:60; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

There were many Bible beliefs that the first Advent believers in 1843 and 1844 didn't understand. Many thought that when a person died they would go directly to heaven or to hell.

Mrs. Harmon and one of her daughters heard the pastor say during a sermon that when a person died they didn't go to heaven right away. Instead they would sleep in the grave until Jesus returned and resurrected them. He read Bible texts from Ezekiel 18:4; Ecclesiastes 9:5; 1 Timothy 6:15, 16; and Romans 2:7.

Young Ellen was listening when her mother and sister talked about what they had heard. Later, after Ellen heard the pastor speak about death and the resurrection, she accepted it. First Thessalonians 4:16-18 and 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 tell us about the resurrection at Jesus' second coming.[2]

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

The Bible tells us, in clear and direct terminology, that the "dead know nothing." Nowhere in the Bible will you be able to find a verse that espouses the doctrine of immortality directly at death. In fact, the word "immortal" is used only one time in the Bible, and it is in reference to God. Also, in 1 Timothy 6:15, 16 the word "immortality" is used to describe God, saying that He alone is the one who has it.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed some more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

What is a soul? Humanity did not receive a soul at Creation. When God breathed into humanity's nostrils the breath of life, humanity *became* a living being (Genesis 2:7). The formula is as follows:

Dust of the earth + the breath of life = a living being, or soul.

Actually, this breath of life is not limited to humans. The Bible attributes the breath of life to animals as well (Genesis 7:15, 22).

There is no text in the Bible that indicates that the soul survives the body as a conscious entity. Scripture teaches that immortality of the soul was conditional on mankind's obedience (Genesis 2:16). God alone has immortality (1 Timothy 6:16).

What a soul is not. The concept of the immortality of the soul originated with the Greeks. When Greek thought and Hebrew-Christian thought came into the Early Church, unfortunately, the Greek thought prevailed. "This view says, in effect, that there is a portion of me, my soul, that will continue to exist. During my lifetime here on earth this immortal soul is lodged in my mortal body. What happens at death is that my body dies and turns to dust, while my immortal soul is released and made free so that it can continue its immortal existence without being hamstrung by confinement in a body."[3]

This concept that our souls are finally "free" may seem like a great idea, especially for people who have had many physical challenges in this life. But what this view leads to, then, is to regard the body as unnecessary; maybe even evil. But when God created the world, and mankind, "God saw *everything* [emphasis supplied] that He had made, and indeed it was very good" (Genesis 1:31).

Understanding the error of this belief is important for teens in light of its significance regarding the relationship between mind, body, and spirit. How we take care of our minds affects our bodies and spirits;

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

Think-Pair-Share

Challenge

Do not be afraid to respectfully and lovingly challenge students and question what they say. This will help them learn how to back up their arguments. If a student makes a statement about the state of the dead, even if it's one that is obvious, ask them why they believe it, and where the Scripture backs up their statement. This will give them more of a desire not to just know their religious doctrines but to study them in the Bible in order to see why people believe them.

how we take care of our bodies affects our minds and spirits; and how we take care of our spirits affects our minds and bodies.[4]

- How can taking care of my mind affect my body and spirit?
- How can taking care of my body affect my mind and spirit?
- How can taking care of my spirit affect my mind and body?

(Having the students demonstrate the answers to these questions might be a good active learning exercise.)

Receiving Immortality. While immortality was conditional on our obedience, we will again receive immortality—but only when Christ returns. "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 corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1 Corinthians15:51-53, NKJV).

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Talk about how many people see beauty in the idea of going to heaven as soon as death occurs. When someone first hears it, the teaching can sound like a comforting idea. However, ask the students thought-provoking questions such as: "How would you find the idea comforting that the deceased are looking down on all this suffering from heaven?" "How do you think the dead would feel in heaven if they are witness to such atrocities happening down here?" "How does that view fit in with the description of heaven that there will be no more pain, no more sorrow?" Use these questions to begin a brief discussion.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Genesis 3:5 contains the first lie ever recorded in

cornerstoneconnections

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite students to share the Key Text *with the class if they have committed it to memory.*
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* The Great Controversy. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that spoke most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quotes in Further Insight *convey the point of the story in this lesson.*

history: "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (NIV).

Satan knew that the thought of being immortal like God would be appealing to Eve, but, unfortunately, she was in for a rude awakening.

Satan is cunning. He is skilled in the art of beauty and is a master at deception. The Bible refers to him as appearing to be an angel of light. He is good at making himself and his lies appealing to the senses and emotions. The only way we can decipher the truth is through Jesus Christ. We must constantly allow ourselves to spend time in His Word as well as to pray. We must be open to the truth and allow God to show it to us. We can do this by praying to God to reveal the truth to us and by removing any preconceived notions of what we think is right. We must let Christ reveal His truth through the Bible, not through traditions of men or of our own desires.

This verse sums up the reality of Satan's deception: "[God,] who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen" (1 Timothy 6:16, NKJV).

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[1] Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy,* p. 556.

[2] Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1915), pp. 48-51.

[3] Don F. Neufeld and Julia Neuffer, eds., *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Students' Source Book* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1962), p. 481.

[4] See Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1905), p. 77, for an example of the mind-body-spirit connection.



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire*), chapters 33, 34.

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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: Genesis 3:1-5; Psalm 146:4; Isaiah 38:18, 29; Revelation 16:13, 14.
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Photo by Jacqui Janetzco

keytext

"When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing."

(Psalm 146:4, NIV)

flashlight

"Immortality, promised to man on condition of obedience, had been forfeited by transgression. Adam could not transmit to his posterity that which he did not possess; and there could have been no hope for the fallen race had not God, by the sacrifice of His Son, brought immortality within their reach" *(The Great Controversy*, p. 533).

what do you think?

To have an immortal soul means that even though the body dies, the soul and consciousness of the person lives on and floats up to heaven or hell or somewhere else. The Bible tells us that when sin entered our world, the penalty was death. When we die, our life ceases and even our thoughts end. Find and list five Bible verses that tell us about death and when we will receive an immortal life.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

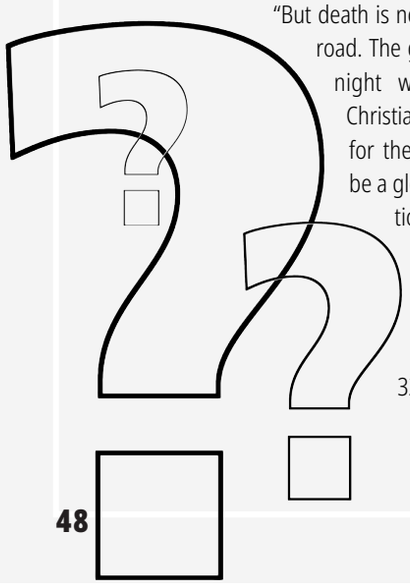
did you know?

The idea of the immortal soul originated with pagan Greek philosophers—or it was at least through them that it eventually made its way into Christian theology.

"The Bible declares that the dead know not anything, that their thoughts have perished; they have no part in anything that is done under the sun; they know nothing of the joys or sorrows of those who were dearest to them on earth" (*The Great Controversy,* p. 556).

"But death is not the end of the road. The grave is not a dark night without a morning. Christians never say goodbye for the last time, for there will be a glorious reunion on resurrection morning. . . .

"On that day we shall have final closure, 'when death is swallowed up in victory' (1 Corinthians 15:54)."—Mark Finley, *Solid Ground,* pp. 325, 226.



INTO THE STORY

"Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

"And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

"When his breath departs, he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans perish."

"For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth."

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

(Genesis 3:1-5, KJV; Psalm 146:4, ESV; Isaiah 38:18; Revelation 16:13, 14, KJV)



OUT OF THE STORY

Why do you think Eve allowed the serpent to tempt her?

The serpent told Eve that were she to eat of the tree she would be like God. What irony exists in those words (see Genesis 1:26)?

Why do you think the serpent deceived Eve with the lie of immortality?

In what ways did the serpent mix truth and error together here? Why do you think he did it that way, instead of just coming out and telling her an obvious lie right from the start?

What do you think the Bible means when it refers to death as a "sleep"?

Can you think of any verses that individuals might use or interpret incorrectly as saying that the soul never dies? If so, what are they?

What do these verses tell us about Satan's nature?

punch lines

"More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" **(1 Corinthians 15:15-20, NIV).**

"For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing" **(Ecclesiastes 9:5, NIV).**

"Now when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed. But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay" **(Acts 13:36, 37, NIV).**

further insight

"Through the two great errors, the immortality of the soul and Sunday sacredness, Satan will bring the people under his deceptions."—Ellen G. White, *Maranatha,* p. 188

"God has given the world sufficient light to enable them to discover the snare."

—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy,* p. 556

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read Ecclesiastes 9:5.

Many people believe that death is simply the beginning of another immortal journey for the soul. However the Bible is clear that at death the mind cannot continue to think.

Why do you think the issue of the immortal soul versus the mortal soul is such a heavily debated topic among Christian denominations?

Sunday

Read Genesis 3:4.

The devil has used the false doctrine of the immortal soul for thousands of years. He used the same deception with Eve in the garden when he told her that she would surely not die. Even in this modern age the media portrays it, pastors preach it, and it has become an almost second-nature belief to many.

Society has a lot to do with ingraining this idea of the soul's immortality into our minds. What are some examples from media/movies/television that back up this statement?

Monday

Read Psalm 146:4.

The *Key Text* and today's reading talks about how when an individual dies, their plans perish. What does this mean?

Once you understand that the dead are "asleep," unconscious, and cannot be communicated with, what kinds of common deceptions are you protected from? Why, then, is a proper understanding of this topic so important?

Tuesday

Read Romans 6:23.

Humanity suffers death because of Adam and Eve's sin. They both gave into temptation and because of their actions all of humanity would suffer for thousands of years. Deception, sorrow, murder, adultery, thievery, and many more sinful patterns erupted into the aftermath of the eating of the fruit. Why do you think one "small" act of disobedience resulted in such a way?

Wednesday

Read John 11:1-15.

The idea of soul sleep is a belief held by more people than just Adventists. Martin Luther, a 16th-century Protestant Reformer, said this: "We should learn to view our death in the right light, so that we need not become alarmed on account of it, as unbelief does; because in Christ it is indeed not death, but a fine, sweet and brief sleep, which brings us release from this vale of tears, from sin and from the fear and extremity of real death and from all the misfortunes of this life, and we shall be secure and without care, rest sweetly and gently for a brief moment, as on a sofa, until the time when he shall call and awaken us together with all his dear children to his eternal glory and joy. For since we call it a sleep, we know that we shall not remain in it, but be again awakened and live, and that the time during which we sleep, shall seem no longer than if we had just fallen asleep."—*A Compend of Luther's Theology*, edited by Hugh Thomson Ker, Jr., p. 242.

Thursday

Read 2 Timothy 3:15-17.

Many people who have never read the Bible (and some who have) believe that their dead relatives are looking down on them from heaven. What is the harm in believing this concept? How can the truth about where we go when we die comfort those who have lost loved ones?

How does the concept of what happens when we die impact my relationship with Jesus and others?

Friday

Read 1 Corinthians 15:15-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17.

Many times we find ourselves thinking about death. It's a natural fact of life. What is the first thing you imagine when thoughts of death enter your mind? Does the idea frighten you? How did today's reading encourage you as you thought about death?

this week's reading*

The Great Controversy (or *Love Under Fire*), chapters 33, 34.

**Love Under Fire* is a special adaptation of *The Great Controversy,* created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.