



1. Revelation's Keys of Death



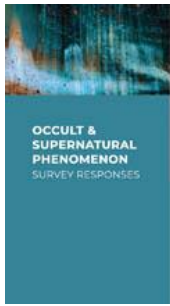
2. A few years ago, Ohio University and the Howard Scripps News Service conducted a survey on the occult and supernatural phenomenon. In this survey, they asked people three questions.



3. Question number one, *do you believe there could be such a thing as ghosts and the appearance of dead people?* 48% said yes. 47% said no. 5% said I don't know.



4. Question number two, *do you think books and television shows and movies about monsters and the supernatural are harmless or do you worry about their effect on people?* 54% of the respondents said, "yes, I'm worried about their effect on people". 39% said, "no, they're harmless". 7% said "I don't know".



QUESTION 3

Do you believe that people who claim to be witches or have mystical powers are self-deluded or do you think they could have mystical powers?

63% **THEY'RE DELUDED**
28% **NO, THEY COULD HAVE SPECIAL POWERS**
9% **I DON'T KNOW**

5. Question number three, *do you believe that people who claim to be witches or have mystical powers are self-deluded or do you think they could have mystical powers?* 63% said they're deluded. 28% said no, they could have special powers. and 9% said I don't know.



QUESTION 3

Do you believe that people who claim to be witches or have mystical powers are self-deluded or do you think they could have mystical powers?

63% **THEY'RE DELUDED**
28% **NO, THEY COULD HAVE SPECIAL POWERS**
9% **I DON'T KNOW**

6. In the last few generations, there has been a growing interest in this world of the supernatural and the occult, demons and sorcery, and wizards and mediums who can channel the dead. You see it portrayed in movies, on television talk shows, in books, and even in cartoons.

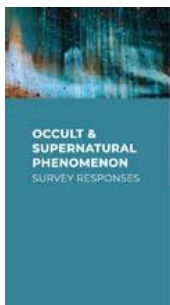


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63% **THEY'RE DELUDED**
28% **NO, THEY COULD HAVE SPECIAL POWERS**
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7. As you can tell from this survey, people don't know what to believe. They're scared and they're confused about what happens and whether there is life beyond the grave. But the good news is, you will find that the Bible addresses every single one of those questions in a very clear and understandable way.



QUESTION 3

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28% **NO, THEY COULD HAVE SPECIAL POWERS**
9% **I DON'T KNOW**

8. We're going to let the Bible speak tonight and we're going to begin in the book of Revelation. Our foundational text for this evening is Revelation 1:18. This is the one we're going to keep coming back to because it provides the good news and the theme for our topic tonight.

REVELATION 1:18

"I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of death."



9. In Revelation 1:18, the Bible says, and this is Jesus speaking, *"I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of death."*

That's good news! Jesus is saying to you and me: "Don't let this subject scare you. Don't let this subject frighten and confuse you."

REVELATION 1:18

"I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of death."



10. Jesus says, *"I'm the One who died on the cross. I'm the One who went into the grave. I'm the One who had victory over death. I hold the keys of death and I have the answers for you."*

So, if we want to understand what happens at the end of life, guess what we have to do first? We've got to study what happens at the beginning of life. So, we're going to start our journey in the book of Genesis and let God talk to us about the beginning of life.

REVELATION 1:18

"I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of death."



11. Please take your Bibles and let's go to Genesis chapter three, and I want to read the first five verses.
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GENESIS 3:1-5

"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

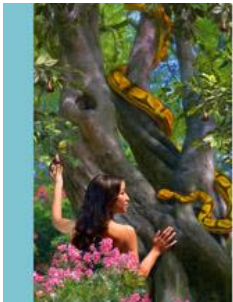
12. We have already read this passage previous in the seminar, but I want to read it again. Pay close attention to this conversation between Eve and the serpent. The Bible says, *"Now, the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall*



GENESIS 3:1-5

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

- 13.** *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*



GENESIS 3:1-5

is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not

- 14.** *is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you ...' what? ". . .die.' Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not*

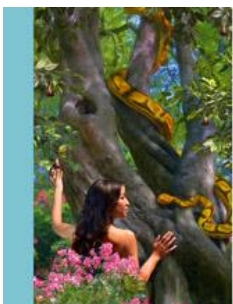


GENESIS 3:1-5

surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

- 15.** *surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*

This is a significant verse for understanding this subject. Adam and Eve are in the perfect garden of Eden. Eve somehow gets near the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and eventually has a conversation with a serpent. The Bible identifies this serpent to be the Devil.



GENESIS 3:1-5

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- 16.** Notice how Satan twists things. He starts the conversation off by saying, "*Has God said you can't eat of any of these trees?*" Now, did God say that they couldn't eat of any of these trees? He didn't say that. He said they could have the fruit of any tree except, which one? The one in the middle—that was their test of loyalty. Now it's a bad idea to get into a conversation with the devil. But Eve corrects the serpent and says, "*No, just the tree in the middle. God has said that tree we shall not eat of it, nor touch it, or we shall die.*"



GENESIS 3:1-5

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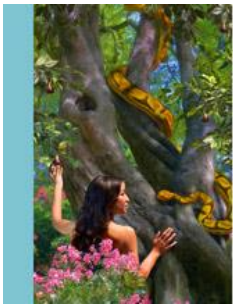
17. God knew that when humankind chooses to disobey Him, when humankind steps on Satan's ground and opens the door of temptation, it begins the process of death. They may not have died that very minute, but God was telling Adam and Eve that such a course will bring death into this world. When Eve took of that fruit, the process of death started. Notice that God says, "You will surely die," and what does the serpent come back and say? "You will **not** surely die." The devil boldly contradicts God. The very first lie that was ever told on the face of this earth was a lie about death.



GENESIS 3:1-5

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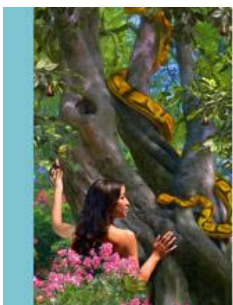
18. That's why it's important to understand this subject. In fact, what the devil said is, "You will not surely die. *Instead when you eat of this fruit, you will enter a new kind of existence. You will be like God. You will know good and evil. The mysteries of the universe will be open to you.*"



GENESIS 3:1-5

surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

19. Do you realize, that precisely mirrors the spiritualism of today? Spiritualism says that when you die, you don't surely die. You enter another world of existence where you will, in a sense, be like God. Spiritualism goes all the way back to the devil's first lie in the garden of Eden.



GENESIS 3:1-5

surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

20. Ever since then, the devil has been trying to twist the truth about death. He wants us to believe that we can have eternal life without Jesus. He doesn't want us to believe that the wages of sin really is death. He wants us to believe that we can do whatever we want and everything will be OK—no consequences to live with. What we need to do, therefore, is go into the Scriptures, untwist the devil's lie, and see what God's truth is concerning this subject. Because Jesus said, "I'm the One that has the keys of death."



- 21.** There's one term we have to talk about before we go to some more Bible verses. How many of you have ever heard this term—shown on the screen—the immortal soul? Can I see your hands? Have you ever heard anybody talk about the immortal or the never-dying soul?



- 22.** You hear that talked about in many Christian circles, but I'm going to make a statement that might shock you. In the entire Bible—from Genesis to Revelation—never once does the Bible use the term the immortal soul. You can search from the first book of the Bible till the last book of the Bible, and you won't find it there. The idea that the soul is immortal and keeps on living actually comes from pagan philosophy that crept into the church in the early and Middle Ages.



- 23.** You can take out a concordance and you will never find that term in the Bible. The only one who is described as immortal is God Himself. You can read that in 1 Timothy 6:16. If we could get out a concordance, we would discover that there are approximately 1,600 references to the word 'soul' in the Bible, but in all 1,600 references, the soul is never described as being immortal. You may say, "*I thought that was all over the Bible.*" But that's what happens when we sometimes assume things without actually studying the Scriptures for ourselves.

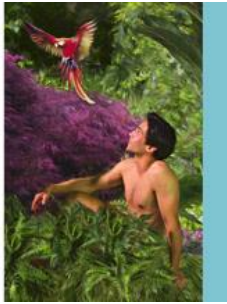


- 24.** What we need to do is understand what a "soul" is. Is a soul some separate part of our body that flies away when we die, as tradition says? Or does the Bible teach something else?

Let's go back to Genesis and allow the Bible to give us its own definition of what is a soul because we really can't understand this subject of death until we know that. Genesis 2:7 describes the process of life.

GENESIS 2:7

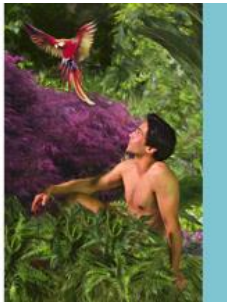
"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."



25. The Bible says, "*And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul*"

GENESIS 2:7

"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."



26. I want you to think about the process of life the Bible just described. It says that God basically took His hands and formed man's body from the dust of the ground. Then He breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, that spark of life that can only come from God. Then, the Bible says, "*man became a living soul.*" It doesn't say that God put a soul into man as a separate component. No, man **became** a living soul.



A SOUL IS A LIVING PERSON

27. The Bible teaches us that anything with a body and the breath of life in it is a 'soul.' In other words, a soul is a person. A soul is a living being. I do not *have* a soul, I *am* a soul. That figure of speech we use in our world today is actually true. When we see someone who's down on their luck, what do we usually say? "*Oh, that poor ...*" what? "*.. soul.*" Are we saying there's some poor spirit that's floating around? No, we're saying, that's an unfortunate person down on their luck. A soul is a person.

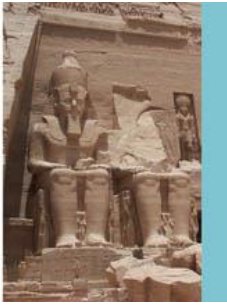


A SOUL IS A LIVING PERSON

28. The Bible does not teach that the soul is a separate part of our body that flies away upon death. You say, "The Bible explains that very clearly." But let's look at some verses in the Bible that show how the word *soul* is used. I'm not going to go through 1600 verse where the word "*soul*" is used, or we'll be here all night. But let's look at a few.

GENESIS 46:27

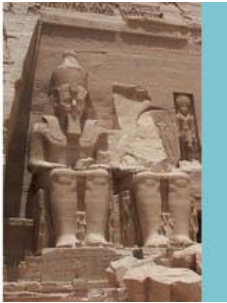
"And the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, were two souls. All the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten."



- 29.** Let's look at Genesis 46:27. Here the Bible is describing the life of Joseph. The Bible says, in the King James Version: *"And the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, were two souls. All the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten."*
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GENESIS 46:27

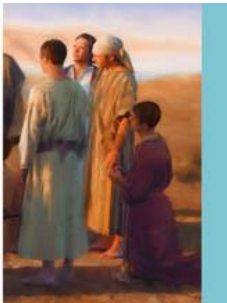
"And the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, were two souls. All the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten."



- 30.** The Bible is talking about Joseph's wife. She gave birth to two souls. Let's ask a question, what did she give birth to? Two spooks that were floating around? No, she gave birth to two babies—babies that had a body and the breath of life. She gave birth to two living people, because a soul is a person.
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ACTS 2:41

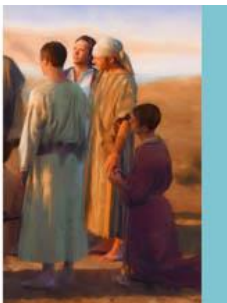
"Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them."



- 31.** Let's go to another verse, this time in the New Testament. Let's look at Acts 2:41 when Peter preached on the day of Pentecost. The Bible describes it this way: *"Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them."*
-

ACTS 2:41

"Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them."



- 32.** Peter preaches on the day of Pentecost; 3,000 people accept the gospel and they're baptized. Now, let me ask you question. Who was baptized? A bunch of spirits that were floating around? No, 3,000 people, because a soul is a person.



EZEKIEL 18:20

"The soul who sins shall die."

33. That's why in Ezekiel 18:20, Ezekiel himself wrote, "*The soul who sins shall die.*"

Souls die because a soul is a person. You say "*The Bible makes that pretty clear. But pastor, isn't there something that goes back to God when a person dies?*" And the answer is yes, but it's not the soul because a soul is a person.



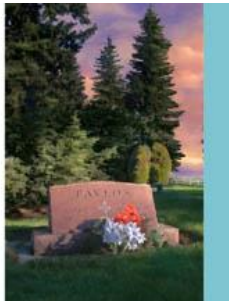
EZEKIEL 18:20

"The soul who sins shall die."

34. So now, we must answer another question. What actually happens when a person dies? For this we must turn to the book of Ecclesiastes chapter 12, verse seven. By the way, who wrote the book of Ecclesiastes, can you tell me? Solomon did. Solomon was known as the wisest man that ever lived, filled with the Spirit of God when he wrote this, and he actually talks about the process of both life and death.

ECCLESIASTES 12:7

"Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it."

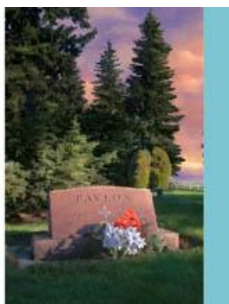


35. Notice what Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes 12:7. The Bible says, "*Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the **spirit** will return to God who gave it.*"

If we're not careful, when we read that verse, we'll jump too fast and say, "*You see, there's the spirit that goes back to God. That's the part of man that keeps on living forever.*" But not so fast.

ECCLESIASTES 12:7

"Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it."



36. Let's allow the Bible to interpret itself. First of all, this verse clearly tells us that when a person dies, what happens to the body? It turns back to dust. When you're buried in the ground, give it enough time, the body disintegrates back to ashes and dust. What do the preachers say? "Ashes to ashes and dust to dust." That comes from the Bible. The body returns to the elements from which it was made because Genesis says that God formed the human body from what? The dust of the ground. So that makes sense.

ECCLESIASTES 12:7

"Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it."



37. Then it says the “*spirit*” returns to God who gave it. You say, “*But what is this spirit that goes back to God? Is this some conscious part of us that keeps on living or is this something else?*”

THE HEBREW WORD FOR SPIRIT IS “RUACH”

Which simply means “breath.”

38. The Old Testament Hebrew word for spirit is actually “*ruach*”, which simply means “*breath*.” That spirit is the breath of life God gave man at the beginning. At death, that breath leaves the body and goes back to God.

JOB 27:3

All the while my **breath** is in me, and the **spirit** of God is in my nostrils.”

GENESIS 2:7

God... breathed into his nostrils the **breath of life**; and man became a living soul.”



39. Notice in Job 27:3 how the Bible uses the words “breath” and “spirit” synonymously. Job is describing the trials and tribulations he is going through, and he says in Job 27:3 (KJV), *All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils.*”

JOB 27:3

All the while my **breath** is in me, and the **spirit** of God is in my nostrils.”

GENESIS 2:7

God... breathed into his nostrils the **breath of life**; and man became a living soul.”



40. Well, what does that mean? The spirit of God is in his nostrils? That sounds strange. The Bible is not speaking here about the Holy Spirit. Genesis 2:7 said that God breathed into man’s nostrils the “breath of life”. The spirit that goes back to God is simply the breath of life that God gives us from the beginning. And when you think about it, that makes perfect sense because when a person dies, what do they stop doing? They stop breathing. The breath goes back to God. Just a few verses in the Bible makes that so clear.

JOB 27:3

All the while my **breath** is in me, and the **spirit** of God is in my nostrils."

GENESIS 2:7

God... breathed into his nostrils the **breath of life**; and man became a living soul."



- 41.** But then we wonder, *"What exactly happens when persons go to the grave? Is there life beyond the grave? Are they conscious or aware of anything that's going on in this world?"*

Let's keep allowing the Bible to give us the answer and go back to the book of Ecclesiastes. We're already there, so let's go to chapter nine and Solomon will answer that question in verses five and six.

ECCLESIASTES 9:5-6

"For the living know that they will die; but the dead know **nothing**. And they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten.



- 42.** The Bible says, *"For the living know that they will die; but the dead know..."* how much? *"... nothing. And they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten.*

ECCLESIASTES 9:5-6

Also their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished. Nevermore will they have a share in anything done under the sun."



- 43.** *Also their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished. Nevermore will they have a share in anything done under the sun."*

- 44.** And then verse 10 says, *"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."*

ECCLESIASTES 9:10

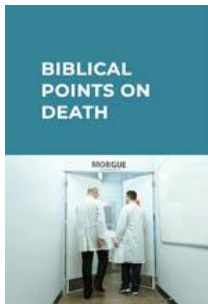
"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going."





1. The dead know nothing.
2. Their memory is gone because they are unconscious.
3. They are no longer involved in the affairs of this world.
4. So take life seriously.

45. This passage contains so many lessons, so we'll need to go through it a little slower here. Clearly, the Bible is telling us that when a person dies, they are not aware of anything that is going on in this world. It says the living know that they're going to die. But the dead know nothing. Sin can't touch them and the evil things that happen in this world can't hurt them anymore. They peacefully sleep in the grave. They are no longer involved in the affairs of this world, according to the Bible.



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46. But there's a phrase in here that is sometimes misunderstood, and it disturbs people. It's the phrase that says, "*The memory of them is forgotten.*" We look at that and our hair bristles on the back of our necks and we think, "*No, I will never forget! I will never forget my loved one who passed away.*"



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47. The Bible is not saying that *our* memory of them is forgotten. The Bible is saying that *their* memory is gone because they're sleeping in the grave. They are not aware of what is going on in this world. That's why Ecclesiastes describes it as saying *their* love, *their* hatred, and *their* envy are now perished. *Their* memory of what goes on here is gone, not *ours*.



48. **[Share your own memory of a loved one here]**-- I think about my grandmother. We called her Grandma Esther. My grandma was probably one of the most Godly women you would ever meet. Gentle, kind, and long-suffering. I mean, she grew up under difficult circumstances. She was married to someone who was not a believer and who was, at times, somewhat abusive. But you could always see the love of Jesus in her face.



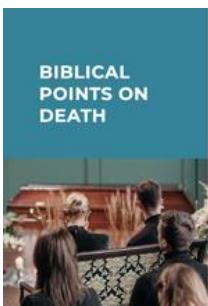
49. Thursday night was always grocery night. My mom and dad would go to the grocery store and they'd buy the food they needed for the week. But before they went to the store, they would drop me off at Grandma Esther's house and I'd spend Thursday night with her.



50. I can remember spending Thursday nights there with Grandma. She had a dog named Spotty and two cats, Calico and Pumpkin, and I loved playing with them. Grandma lived right across the street from Jim and Nina's pizzeria. Sometimes she would take me across the street, and we would get fresh pizza. Then she would give me ice cream from her freezer. Sometimes she would sit me at the table, and we would just read the Bible together. I'll always remember that. Grandma Esther died when she was about 96 or 97.

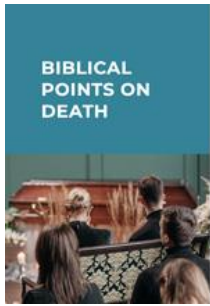


51. Her memory of me has gone, but my memory of her is not forgotten! She was a tremendous influence in my life. I'm looking forward to seeing her again. We will always remember those that have passed on. The Bible is simply saying that when they're in the grave, they are unconscious.



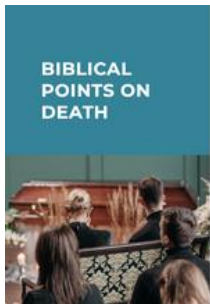
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52. As a minister, I've been to many funerals—more than my fair share. Funerals are not my favorite place to go. I understand it is certainly the job of a minister and it's an opportunity to bring comfort to people who are hurting and point them to Jesus.



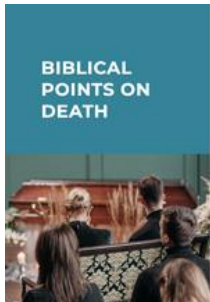
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53. But at a funeral there is pain, there is sorrow, and there is crying. Sometimes it's just hard to watch that. But there are so many funerals where people stand before a casket weeping and sobbing, devastated, why? Because for years, they held on to a grudge. For years, they withheld forgiveness over something that, on reflection, was so silly and insignificant.



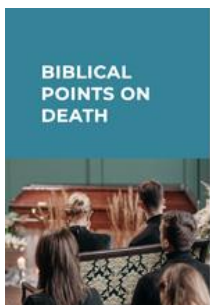
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54. They didn't talk with each other. They spoke ill of each other. They avoided each other at family gatherings. Now death knocked on their door long before it was expected, and they're gone. All that person wants is one chance to say, "I'm sorry." One chance to give a hug and say, "I really did love you." Now it's too late.



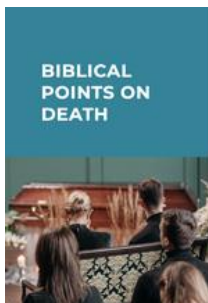
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55. Life is too precious for us to be harboring unforgiveness against people. That's why the Bible says, "*whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.*" Take life seriously now. Spend time with your family. Don't go to bed angry over crazy things. If there's a friend or a family member that you're estranged from, go and make it right before death comes and it's too late to do it.



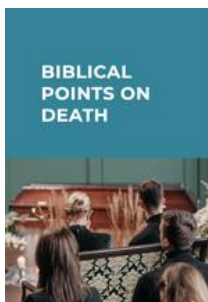
1. The dead know nothing.
2. Their memory is gone because they are unconscious.
3. They are no longer involved in the affairs of this world.
4. So take life seriously.

56. The Bible also tells me that if there are decisions I need to make in my spiritual life, decisions about my relationship with Jesus, then don't delay. Because the truth is, we don't know when our time will come. We don't know when death will knock on our door.



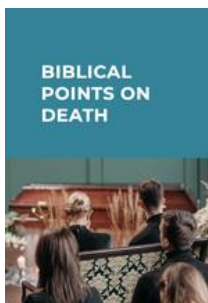
1. The dead know nothing.
2. Their memory is gone because they are unconscious.
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4. So take life seriously.

57. I'm not going to tell you that if you don't give your life to Jesus, you could be run over by a Mack truck tonight. I don't want to be overly dramatic. But it's important to realize that tomorrow is not promised to any of us. We don't know what the future is holding. That's why the Bible tells us here in Ecclesiastes, *Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might*. Take life seriously. Take your relationship with Jesus seriously.



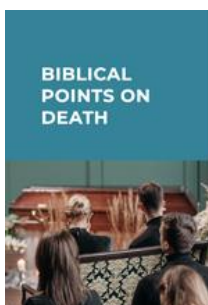
1. The dead know nothing.
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3. They are no longer involved in the affairs of this world.
4. So take life seriously.

58. Every so often, ministers are asked to do the funerals of people who are not believers. As pastors, we never want to stand up there and make a judgment as to where someone's eternity is because God hasn't set us up to be the judge. We are not called to judge the dead, we are called to address the living, to point them to the promises of the Bible, to point the family to Jesus.



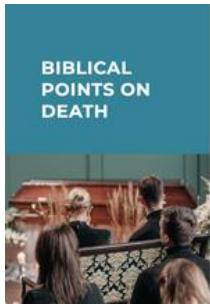
1. The dead know nothing.
2. Their memory is gone because they are unconscious.
3. They are no longer involved in the affairs of this world.
4. So take life seriously.

59. But there is a difference between a Christian funeral and a non-Christian funeral, for the Bible says we Christians should not grieve as do those who have no hope (1 Thess. 4:13). As Christians, we have this hope that burns within our hearts, hope in the coming of the Lord. Can you say, amen?



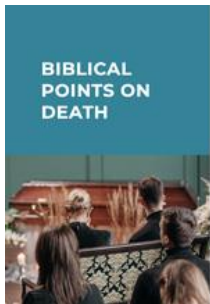
1. The dead know nothing.
2. Their memory is gone because they are unconscious.
3. They are no longer involved in the affairs of this world.
4. So take life seriously.

60. Oh, there's still weeping. There's still crying. There's still pain, even in a Christian funeral, because it hurts to lose someone. The difference is the Christian knows that death is not the final end. The Christian knows there is a resurrection. The Christian knows that Jesus holds the keys of death. He gives us victory over the grave. That gives us hope! Persons who are not believers may not show it, but deep down they may wonder, will we ever see that person again or is this the dreadful absolute end?



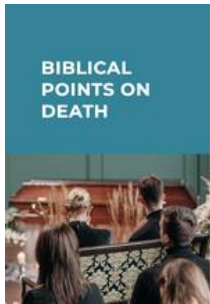
1. The dead know nothing.
2. Their memory is gone because they are unconscious.
3. They are no longer involved in the affairs of this world.
4. So take life seriously.

61. You see, there's a benefit to knowing Jesus because Jesus says, "*When you know Me, you have victory over the grave because I will give you the keys of death.*" In fact, in the Bible, did you know that Jesus actually gave us a little picture of what it means to have victory over the grave? He gave us a demonstration of how has the keys of death and what that means. Would you like to see it?



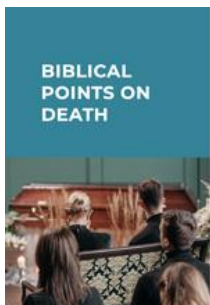
1. The dead know nothing.
2. Their memory is gone because they are unconscious.
3. They are no longer involved in the affairs of this world.
4. So take life seriously.

62. Then please take your Bible and turn to John chapter 11. This is the story of Lazarus. We see here in John 11 that Jesus was close friends with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. He spent a lot of time at their home in Bethany. In fact, for Jesus, this was His respite from an evil world. The rabbis and the religious leaders were always following Him, trying to twist His words, laboring to find something they could accuse Him of. They never left Jesus alone.



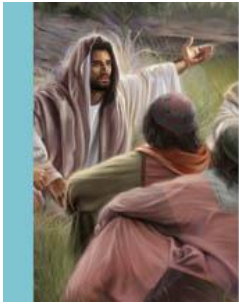
1. The dead know nothing.
2. Their memory is gone because they are unconscious.
3. They are no longer involved in the affairs of this world.
4. So take life seriously.

63. How would you feel to have the press or, as they say, the Paparazzi, following everywhere you go, taking pictures, just waiting for you to do something that could be misconstrued so they could put into the papers or on the news, just to try to make you look bad? Let's be honest, how many of us would get annoyed after a few minutes? Most of us probably would. But Jesus was patient. And many times, going to Mary, Martha, and Lazarus' house, was Jesus' way to get away from it all. They were very close.



1. The dead know nothing.
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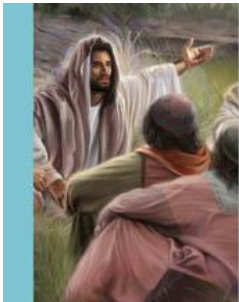
64. The Bible tells us the time came when Lazarus was very ill, so ill, he was near death. And the family specifically made a request for Jesus to come. They figured if Jesus could heal the blind and the deaf and the lepers, then surely, He could heal Lazarus, one of His best friends. Amazingly, to the dismay of His disciples, Jesus purposely waited two days before he went to Bethany, and he intentionally let Lazarus die.



JOHN 11:11-14

"These things He said, and after that He said to them, 'Our friend Lazarus **sleeps**, but I go that I may wake him up.'

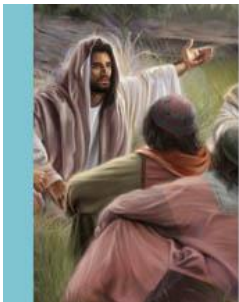
- 65.** Let's pick up the story in verse 11. The Bible says, *"These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus ..." does what? "...sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up."*



JOHN 11:11-14

Then His disciples said, 'Lord, if he sleeps, he will get well.'

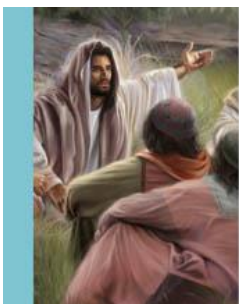
- 66.** *Then His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get well."*



JOHN 11:11-14

However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought he was speaking about taking a rest in sleep. Then Jesus said to them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead.'

- 67.** *However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought he was speaking about taking a rest in sleep. Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead."*



JOHN 11:11-14

However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought he was speaking about taking a rest in sleep. Then Jesus said to them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead.'

- 68.** Notice the word Jesus used to describe death. What word did He say? Sleep. That word is used over and over again in the Bible to describe death. The disciples didn't understand. They thought He meant Lazarus was taking a nap and would get better. Jesus had to come right out and say, "No, Lazarus is dead." In other words, He's sleeping in the grave.



- 69.** Then two days later, Jesus goes to Bethany, where Lazarus had died. When He went to the tomb and saw all the family and friends of Lazarus weeping, His heart was touched with compassion.



JOHN 11:35
"Jesus wept."

- 70.** And in John 11:35, which is the shortest, and yet one of the most powerful verses in the Bible, It simply says, "*Jesus wept.*"

That says a lot to me about the emotions of Jesus. Sometimes we think Jesus doesn't see what I face on this earth. We think Jesus doesn't understand my tears. Jesus doesn't understand my trials and my tribulations. Yet the Bible gives us a picture of a sympathizing Savior.



JOHN 11:35
"Jesus wept."

- 71.** Even though He knew He was going to raise Lazarus, Jesus stood at that tomb, saw the pain that the human family was going through, and the Bible says He was so overcome with emotion that He wept. That show of emotion tells me how much Jesus loves you and how much He loves me. I wonder how much He weeps over the things that happen in our lives.



JOHN 11:35
"Jesus wept."

- 72.** As He stood at the tomb, Jesus decided to give us a powerful picture of what it means to have the keys of death. He gives us an unforgettable picture of what He promises to do for everyone who believes in Him. After praying to the Father, Jesus did the unimaginable. Let's pick it up in verse 43.

JOHN 11:43-44

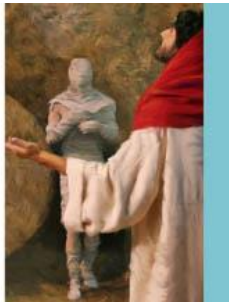
"Now when He had said these things, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come forth!'"



- 73.** In verse 43, the Bible says, *"Now when He had said these things, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!"*

JOHN 11:43-44

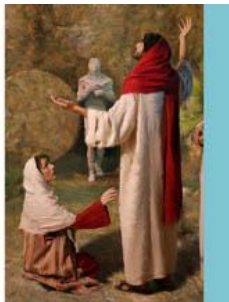
And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth.



- 74.** *And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth.*

JOHN 11:43-44

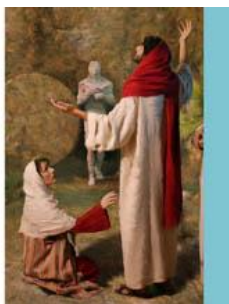
Jesus said to them, 'Loose him, and let him go.'



- 75.** *Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."*

JOHN 11:43-44

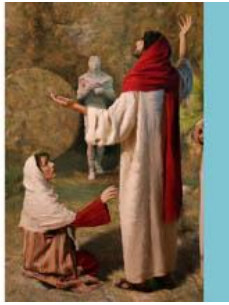
Jesus said to them, 'Loose him, and let him go.'



- 76.** After Jesus spoke those words, there must have been a few moments of eerie silence as the people looked at each other and said, "Did He just say what I thought He said?" All eyes were fixed on the entrance to the tomb. Everyone waited with bated breath to see if the dead man would come forth. After what must have seemed like an eternity, Lazarus eventually appears at the mouth of the tomb struggling to move because he is still wrapped in grave clothes.

JOHN 11:43-44

Jesus said to them,
'Loose him, and let
him go.'



77. The people are so shocked Jesus has to say to them, *“Loose him. Unwrap the man.”* From that moment on there should be no doubt the keys of death are in His hands. Can you say, amen?

In this story, what Lazarus didn't do is just as important as what he did do. You say, *“What do you mean?”* Notice, Lazarus comes out of the tomb and Jesus says, *“Unwrap the grave clothes from the man.”*

JOHN 11:43-44

Jesus said to them,
'Loose him, and let
him go.'



78. Now, I'm going to use something fictional right now to make a point. Imagine it with me. Mary and Martha and the others unwrap the grave clothes. Lazarus adjusts to the light, squints his eyes, looks around, sees Mary, sees Martha, sees Jesus and says, *“What happened? Where am I?”* Mary and Martha say, *“Jesus raised you from the dead, Lazarus. He brought you back to life.”*

JOHN 11:43-44

Jesus said to them,
'Loose him, and let
him go.'



79. Lazarus looks at Jesus with an annoyed look on his face and says, *“What did You do that for? I was up in heaven walking on streets of gold. I was fellowshiping with the angels in perfect paradise. I was singing in the heavenly choir. And You brought me back to this rotten, sinful earth? Why did You do that, Jesus?”*

JOHN 11:43-44

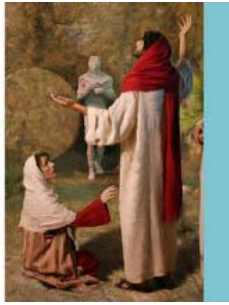
Jesus said to them,
'Loose him, and let
him go.'



80. Does the Bible say that happened? Does Lazarus have any story to tell of heaven, or hell, or anywhere else? No, he was sleeping in the grave, just like Jesus said! I mean, when you really think this through, if we really go to heaven as soon as we die, why does the Bible say we'll get our reward at the second coming of Jesus?

JOHN 11:43-44

Jesus said to them,
"Loose him, and let
him go."



- 81.** If we really go to heaven, or wherever, right after we die, and Jesus pulled Lazarus out of heaven, then that really would have been a dirty trick, wouldn't it? Who would have wanted to leave heaven and come back here? No, Lazarus was sleeping. That's why he had no story to tell.



- 82.** Sleep is the Bible's way of describing death because it's peaceful. Think about when you fall asleep at night. You lay your head down on a pillow, hopefully before midnight; you fall asleep, and you're at peace. Time passes unnoticed and, after seven or eight hours pass by, you wake up in the morning. It doesn't even seem that long. It seems like the snap of a finger. That's what the Bible says death is like.



- 83.** Sin can't hurt the person anymore. Heartache can't touch them. Whether they've been in that grave three years or 3,000 years, they won't know the difference. When they wake up, the first face they see is Jesus Christ giving them victory over the grave because He has the keys of death.



- 84.** I understand that when a person hears this for the first time, it might be a little disturbing. You might be thinking, *"Oh, Pastor, I always loved thinking of my loved one being up in heaven at peace and looking down on me and my family. And now you're telling me he's not in heaven right now? I wish I hadn't heard this message. This takes my joy away."* My friends, don't let it take your joy away. I can understand why this may be hard to wrestle with. I can see how it would be comforting to think of that loved one being heaven.



85. That is a comforting thought, but let's think it through. Would that loved one really be happy being there and looking down on their family? Seeing all the problems the family goes through? All the trials, all the fighting? Watching children or grandchildren stray from the Lord? Making decisions that pain them and they can't do anything about it? Resting in the grave so that sin can't touch you anymore is God's way of protecting us. And His way is always best.



86. Let me illustrate it this way, I'm going to use myself as an example. I want you to really think this through. Let's pretend that as I drive back home tonight, I get hit and I die in a terrible accident on the interstate. Let's pretend that I die and go to heaven. I look down from heaven and I watch as the officer knocks on the door of our home. The officer wakes my wife up in the middle of the night and tells her that her husband has tragically died in a car accident and she is now a widow. I watch as my wife slumps to the ground on her knees and begins to weep and to cry hysterically. The officer stays with her until friends and family can arrive.



87. I watch the next morning as my wife goes into the bedroom of my little girls, and has to wake them up and tell them, "*Girls, you are not going to school today. Daddy died last night. He won't be coming home to us anymore.*" I watch my two little girls break down crying. They love their daddy. They'll miss their daddy. I'm seeing all this from heaven.



88. A few days pass. I watch the funeral take place. I see my mom and dad crying uncontrollably, because children aren't supposed to die before their parents. When the funeral is over and they bring the family up to the casket to see it one last time, before they close that lid, I watch my wife put her hand on my cold, clammy arm and she says, "David, I love you. I'm going to miss you. I don't know how I'm going to make it without you." The tears stream down her face and drip onto mine. It seems as if they will never stop.



89. I watch my two little girls walk by. I watch my six-year old look up at my wife and say, “Mommy, when is Daddy going to wake up? Why doesn’t he answer me anymore?” I’m still looking down from heaven.



90. Time passes. My wife is trying to adjust to being a single mother. I watch her work two jobs, working her hands to the bone. I watch when she puts the girls to bed each night and she goes into our bedroom and just slowly cries herself to sleep for the next three months. I listen to my girls wake up in the middle of the night with nightmares because they don’t have their daddy anymore.



91. More time passes. My wife gets through the grieving process and, after a while, another man starts paying attention to her. I watch another man take her by the hand, take her out to eat, and kiss her lips. I hear her say “I love you” to another man, words that were once reserved for me. Oh, but I’m happy in heaven.



92. Time passes. I watch them get married, become intimate with each other, and I hear my kids call another man, “Daddy.” I watch as slowly over the years my pictures are taken down from the mantle and replaced with his.

Now I ask you, would I be happy? I would not be happy at all! And God knows it. That’s why God’s way is best. We sleep in death. We rest in the grave until the resurrection. Then we walk into the kingdom together. Can you say, amen?



1 THESSALONIANS 4:16-18

"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

- 93.** In fact, let's read about that day, shall we? In 1 Thessalonians 4:16, the Bible says, *"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.*



1 THESSALONIANS 4:16-18

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."

- 94.** *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 then my favorite sentence, *"And thus we shall always be with the Lord."*

This is where sometimes people say, *"Jesus is going to take the souls out of heaven and put them back into the body."* But remember, a soul is a living person—it's not some separate part of our body. Think for a moment how illogical that would be.



1 THESSALONIANS 4:16-18

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."

- 95.** Jesus is going to say to the people in heaven, *"Pardon me folks, but what I need to do is put you back down in your body so that I can come back to the earth and raise you up and take you back to heaven where you already were to begin with."* How much sense does that make? Our God is not an illogical God. The fact that there is a resurrection tells us that people are sleeping. That's why 1 Corinthians 15:54 says that the mortal will put on immortality *at the resurrection.*



- 96.** In my mind's eye, here's what I picture at that second coming. I can just see an angel taking a two-year-old child that was cruelly taken from her mother by some childhood disease and, at the resurrection, places that child back in the hands of her mother and father. A family is reunited. Throughout the earth, parents and children are re-united. Grandparents and grandchildren. Brothers and sisters. Together they make the journey to the kingdom of Heaven. Why? Because Jesus is their savior. Jesus gives them victory over the grave. Jesus has the keys of death! Praise the Lord!



97. I realize that leaves a question in some people's mind. If the dead are sleeping until the resurrection and there is no activity beyond the grave, than what about those who claim to have had a near-death experience? What about those who have been near death on the operating table and claimed to see a great light and hear angels calling them home? What about those who claim to have an out-of-body experience where they were floating above the room and looking down upon their body?



98. We need to keep in mind that when the body is going through serious trauma, filled with strong medication, or near death, the mind can play tricks on us. The mind is a very powerful mechanism. The mind can make us believe we are seeing things that really aren't there. For example, when you've had a dream at night that dream seems very real, doesn't it? You really thought Frankenstein was chasing you. But it was not reality. The mind can do the same thing when the body is hovering between life and death or under intense trauma.



99. Now you may also be wondering: *"Why does it matter what happens when you die? Why does it matter what a person believes about that?"* Good question. Sometimes people say doctrine is unimportant, what matters is just that you believe in Jesus. I agree with a part of that—Jesus is all we need for salvation—we are not saved by works. We are saved by grace through faith. Amen?



100. But doctrine is teaching. If it's in the Bible, it's there for a reason. Every doctrine of the Bible that I misunderstand will cause me to misunderstand something about the character of God, because doctrine tells me something about who He is and what His character is like. Doctrine doesn't save me, but it does help me to be on the right path in this journey through life.



101. I want to emphasize why it is important to know what happens when we die. What about when we hear these stories of people who communicate with the dead—mediums and channelers? You can stay up and watch late night TV—where you’ll hear about the Psychic Network. You can call a 1-900 number and talk to a medium who will channel the spirits and give you advice as to what choices you should make in life. The occult and the supernatural have become a billion-dollar business in this world. So, what are we supposed to make of it?



102. If they claim to see something and they claim to talk to someone, but yet the Bible says the dead know nothing, what am I supposed to make of this?

I want you to take your Bibles and turn to Isaiah chapter 47. In Isaiah chapter 47, God gives us some very strong advice as to what our perspective should be on speaking to the dead and life beyond the grave.



103. Now, as I read this, I’m just going to tell you, this is a verse where God uses some very strong language. He is uttering a rebuke against Babylon because spiritualism came from Babylon. But the problem is that Israel was getting involved in it too, going to mediums and sorcerers.

ISAIAH 47:12-14

“Stand now with your enchantments and the multitude of your sorceries, in which you have labored from your youth—perhaps you will be able to profit,



104. Notice what God said in Isaiah 47, verse 12. The Bible says, “*Stand now with your enchantments and the multitude of your sorceries, in which you have labored from your youth—perhaps you will be able to profit,*

ISAIAH 47:12-14

perhaps you will prevail. You are wearied in the multitude of your counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, and the monthly



105. *perhaps you will prevail. You are wearied in the multitude of your counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, and the monthly*

ISAIAH 47:12-14

prognosticators stand up and save you from what shall come upon you. Behold. They shall be as stubble, the fire shall burn them."



106. *prognosticators stand up and save you from what shall come upon you. Behold. they shall be as stubble, the fire shall burn them."*

ISAIAH 47:12-14

prognosticators stand up and save you from what shall come upon you. Behold. They shall be as stubble, the fire shall burn them."



107. *I'm going to stop here. Would you agree, that's some pretty blatant, straightforward language God uses? God is saying to Babylon and to His people, "Listen, you're going to all these sorcerers, you're going to mediums and wizards instead of going to your God. Go to them if you want to," says God. "See if you profit anything. See what kind of advice they give you."*

ISAIAH 47:12-14

prognosticators stand up and save you from what shall come upon you. Behold. They shall be as stubble, the fire shall burn them."



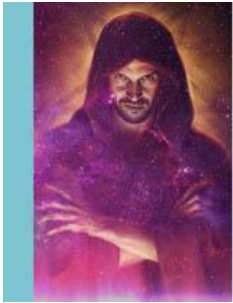
108. *In verse 14, God basically says, "Get away from them. It's a road that leads straight to hell." He says, the fire shall burn them and they shall be as stubble. That's talking about the fires of destruction, the fires of hell. That's how serious God is. He says, "I have nothing to do with those things. Get as far away from them as possible."*

ISAIAH 47:12-14

prognosticators stand up and save you from what shall come upon you. Behold, They shall be as stubble, the fire shall burn them."



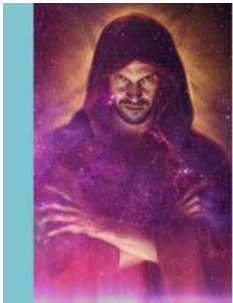
109. You say, "*Why is God so serious about this?*" Let's think about it. If the Bible says the dead know nothing, they rest in the grave till Jesus comes, then who are people talking to when they claim to be speaking to the dead? According to the Bible, it's not their dead loved ones, because they sleep in the grave, they know nothing, their emotions, their memory is perished until the resurrection.



2 THESSALONIANS 2:9

"The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders."

110. Notice what it says in 2 Thessalonians 2:9. The Bible says, "*The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders.*"]You see, the devil can do signs and wonders as well. In Genesis with Eve, what did he turn himself into? A serpent. He can impersonate a dead loved one because he knows how deceptive that would be. We might be thinking, "Oh, that's a low blow, even for the devil." Yes, I know. The devil is willing to stoop that low because he knows that if I really thought that was my mother, I would be likely to believe everything she says.



2 THESSALONIANS 2:9

"The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders."

111. I would reason, "She's experienced that. She has passed from death to life. She must be in Heaven so she must know." So, if this spirit, who is impersonating my mother, says something that's not according to the Word of God, I will believe it because I figure that she's already passed through the grave. Understand, the devil will deceive millions of people that way. That's why the Bible wants us to know the truth about death.



112. I'll give you another example. It's a bit sensitive, and I'm not trying to be negative towards any group, but this is a very good illustration we need to be aware of. Do you know what is one of the most widely documented supernatural phenomenon in the world right now? It's the appearance of the apparition, Mary.



113. It has been seen and documented in many places throughout the world. So that leaves us with a very serious question: is it really Mary, Jesus' mother, that people are seeing? If it is, you might as well take this Bible and throw it out of the door, because it would mean the Bible is a lie, and all the verses we read are meaningless.



114. According to the Bible, that cannot be Mary. No disrespect to Mary. I'm thankful that God used Mary to be the earthly mother of Jesus Christ. I'm thankful for the godly influence she had on Jesus' life. She was an extraordinary woman. But the truth is, Mary is a sinner, just like you and me. Mary needs a Savior to make it to heaven, just like you and me. Mary is in the grave just like all who have passed away.



115. This apparition that people are seeing is going to start speaking—if it hasn't already. When that apparition starts speaking, it will say things that may sound right, but these things will contradict the word of God. Millions of religious believers will be deceived because we don't accept what the Bible teaches about death. That's why it's so important.



116. I'll give you one more example. This might be a hard one too. A number of years ago, I heard another pastor talk about a survey that was done to find out why so many young people were getting involved in the New Age and spiritualism—things like the occult, seances and Ouija boards.



117. It seems that part of the fault lies with many Christian churches today. You say, how is that? What is one of the most popular doctrines in the majority of churches today? It is the belief that when you die, you continue to live in heaven or hell or somewhere else. It is the belief that says when you die you don't sleep in the grave, rather the "spirit" goes on living somewhere.



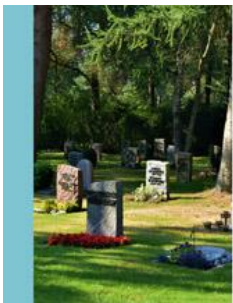
118. When we indoctrinate a young person with that from the beginning, then when they see something on a movie, or when someone drags them to some seance or something appears to them on the internet, they've already been taught by their church that when you die, you don't surely die. It's the same lie that the devil told in the garden of Eden. Young people get sucked into these things because we're not teaching them that when you die, you rest in the grave until Jesus Christ comes.



JOB 7:9-10

"As the cloud disappears and vanishes away, so he who goes down to the grave does not come up.

119. That's why Job is so clear. He says in Job 7:9, 10, "*As the cloud disappears and vanishes away, so he who goes down to the grave does not come up.*"



JOB 7:9-10

He shall never return to his house, nor shall his place know him anymore."

120. *He shall never return to his house, nor shall his place know him anymore."*

At least not until the resurrection, that is. It's always important to follow the teachings of the Bible. The teachings are there for a reason.



JOB 7:9-10

He shall never return to his house, nor shall his place know him anymore."

121. *(If you need to shorten the sermon, you can skip this section and move right to the appeal).*

Before we close tonight, there's probably one final question on somebody's mind right now. You may be thinking, *"Pastor Dave, all these verses make sense. I don't know why I haven't seen that before. But there's one verse in my mind that I'm just not understanding."*



122. Somebody here is asking, *"What about the thief on the cross? Didn't Jesus say that the thief on the cross would go straight to heaven?"* Let's look at that right now.

LUKE 23:43

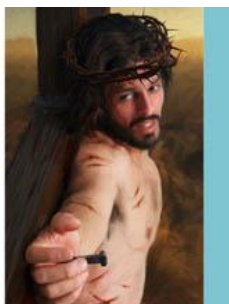
"And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in paradise.'"



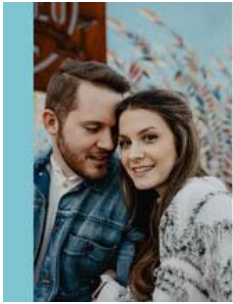
123. In Luke 23:43, the Bible says. *"And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in paradise.'"*

LUKE 23:43

"And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in paradise.'"

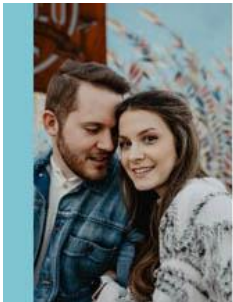


124. There's a problem right there, isn't there? It appears that Jesus said to the thief on the cross, as He forgave his sins, *"Today, Friday, when I die on the cross, you're going to be with Me in paradise."* If that's true, then the Bible has just contradicted itself—and we have a problem. Because all the other verses we read tonight say that we sleep in the grave until the resurrection.



"A woman without her man is nothing."

125. The answer is actually quite simple. It's the case of a misplaced comma. Let me illustrate something to make a point. I want to put this sentence on the screen. "*A woman without her man is nothing.*" Now, I'm not saying I believe that, I'm just using it for an illustration. Now, let's put some punctuation in there and see if it changes the meaning.



"A woman, without her, man is nothing."

126. Let's read it now. "A woman, without her, man is nothing." Does that change the meaning around? In the first sentence the woman is nothing. In the second sentence, the man is nothing, because of the comma.

"Let's eat, Grandma."



127. Another example is this. "*Let's eat, Grandma.*" In this sentence, the person is telling Grandma they are hungry and want to eat. Now change the comma.

"Let's eat Grandma."



128. "*Let's eat Grandma.*" Does that change the meaning of the sentence? Yes! Now the person is a cannibal!

"Let's eat
Grandma."



129. Punctuation makes a difference, doesn't it? What's does this have to do with the thief on the cross? Did you know that the Bible originally was written in the Greek without punctuation? Punctuation was added later by the medieval church. The prevailing idea at the time was that when you die, you just go on living somewhere. So, the comma was placed **before** the word "today," instead of **after**, where it should be.

LUKE 23:43

"And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly I say to you today, you will be with me in paradise.'"



130. When the comma is placed **after** the word "today", notice how it reads: "*And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly I say to you today, you will be with me in paradise."*"

In other words, Jesus is saying, "*Listen, I'm making the promise today that when I come into my kingdom, you will be with me in paradise.*" When the coma is in the right place, it is in perfect harmony with all the other verses in the Bible.



JOHN 20:17

"Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My father."

131. The other way we know this is to remember that when Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene on the Sunday morning of the resurrection, Jesus said to her in John 20:17, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My father."



JOHN 20:17

"Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My father."

132. That was Sunday morning. So, did Jesus tell the forgiven thief that he would go with Him to heaven that day, Friday? No! Was Jesus lying to Mary on Sunday when He said, *I have not yet ascended to My Father?* No! Jesus was promising the thief that when He comes in His Kingdom he would be in paradise. Jesus knew that doesn't happen until the second coming. Jesus was saying, "*Today, on this day, I am making you a promise, that when I come in My Kingdom, you will be with Me in paradise.*"



JOHN 20:17

"Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My father."

133. You see, when a comma is in the right place, all these verses make sense. None of the wording of the Bible was changed. Just a misplaced comma. And God knew we could go to other parts of the Bible and find the answer. We can trust our Bible.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:8

"We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord."



134. The other text some people have a question on is this one: *"To be absent from the body, is to be present with the Lord?"* Do you know that's one of the most misquoted verses in Christianity? The verse doesn't say, *"To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord."*

2 CORINTHIANS 5:8

"We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord."

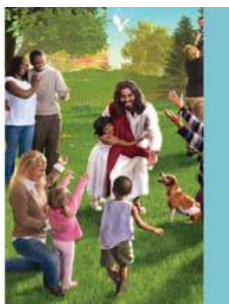


135. Let's look at what the verse actually says. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:8, *"We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord."*

Paul is simply saying, *"Look, I can't wait for the day when I am absent from this sinful body that's got aches and pains and everything else, and I can be present with the Lord with my new body."*

1 CORINTHIANS 15:54

"...this corruptible puts on incorruption, and this mortal puts on immortality. . ."

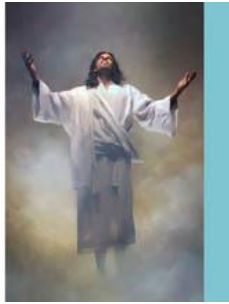


136. Paul knew that happens at the second coming, not at death, because the same author wrote 1 Corinthians 15:54, where he said it's at the resurrection when *"...this corruptible puts on incorruption, and this mortal puts on immortality. . ."*

That's why you never build a doctrine out of one isolated verse in the Bible. You put all the verses together. The Bible must be the final test of truth. So that answers some of the perplexing texts.

JOHN 11:25

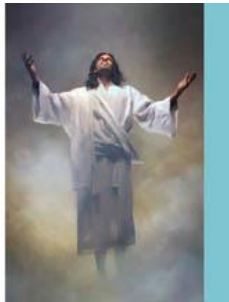
"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he may die, yet he shall live."



137. {THE APPEAL}-- What I want to leave you with tonight are the words of Jesus. Jesus said, *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he may die..."* What does he say? *"...yet he shall live."*

JOHN 11:25

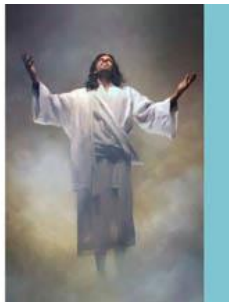
"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he may die, yet he shall live."



138. All of us face the prospect of dying one day, but the good news is, Jesus paid the death penalty for me. When He died on the cross, He took His righteousness and gave it to me. He took my unrighteousness and He took the blame for my sins. When I accept Jesus Christ as my Savior, that means I, too, can have victory over the grave. That means He gives me the keys of death. When you have Jesus, death is nothing to fear. You only sleep for a little while.

JOHN 11:25

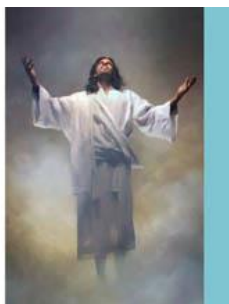
"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he may die, yet he shall live."



139. If I want to have victory over the grave, then I'm going to need Jesus Christ as my Savior. I'm going to need to have a relationship with Him. So, the question for us tonight is this: am I willing to accept Him as my Savior? Am I willing to follow Him as my Lord? Am I willing to trust my life with Jesus, for He holds the keys of death?

JOHN 11:25

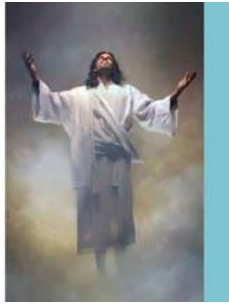
"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he may die, yet he shall live."



140. Heavenly Father, thank you for bringing us good news in a tough subject. Thank you, Lord, that You gave Your life so that we can know the grave is not the end, so that we can be assured we sleep only for a little while and then we shall see Your face. Lord, tonight we give ourselves to You. We place our lives into Your hands and, tonight, we want to say thank You, Jesus. Thank You for giving us life through Your death. Thank You for opening the door to heaven. Thank You, Lord that You give us victory over the grave.

JOHN 11:25

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



141. With every head bowed and every eye closed, if maybe there's someone here tonight that just wants to say, *"Thank You, Jesus, that the grave is not the end. Thank you, Jesus, for eternal life. Now, Lord, take my life and point me in the direction You want me to go"*, I invite you to raise your hand at this time. If you want the assurance of eternal life, and you want Jesus to lead you, I invite you to raise your hand just now. Father, You see any hand that is raised. Bless that person, bless their life. Thank You for all that You have done for us. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.



142.