



Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

“Death, Glorification, Unification: What happens to our Body, Soul and Spirit?”

Lesson 5 – What Happens When People Die, Part 2?

March 12, 2017

I. Lesson Starters:

What happens to our soul the instant we die, where does it go? Does our soul have some sort of holding place like purgatory or soul sleep after we die? What are these places supposed to be and what purpose do they serve? Do you know what the Doctrine of Soul Sleep and purgatory are based on?

II. Refresher for The Souls of Believers

2 Corinthians 5:5-8

5 Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. 6 Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. 7 For we live by faith, not by sight. 8 We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

Philippians 1:22-24

22 If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! ²³ I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; ²⁴ but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

Once a believer has died, while their physical body remains on earth, at the moment of death, the soul/spirit of that believer goes immediately into the presence of God with rejoicing.

III. The Bible Does Not Teach the Doctrine of Soul Sleep

Soul Sleep is when believers die and go into a state of unconscious existence and then regain consciousness when Christ returns and raises them to eternal life. Support for this doctrine has generally been used from the fact that several scripture refer to the state of death as “sleep” or “falling asleep”:

- Matt 9:24, 27:52; John 11:11; Acts 7:60, 13:36; 1 Cor. 15:6, 18, 20, 51

But most would say that scriptural references to death “as sleep” is only metaphorical expression used to indicate that death is only temporary for Christians with respect to the body.

- Jesus does not reference Lazarus soul as sleeping, but himself
- Scripture does not say that “the soul” of a person is asleep, it talks of the person

With respect to passages that indicate that the dead “do not praise God”, these should be understood from the perspective of life in this world.

Psalms 115:17-18

16 I The highest heavens belong to the Lord, but the earth he has given to mankind. 17 It is not the dead who praise the Lord, those who go down to the place of silence; 18 it is we who extol the Lord, both now and forevermore. Praise the Lord.

Revelations 6:9-11

9 When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. ¹⁰ They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?”

¹¹ Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters,^[e] were killed just as they had been.

Scriptures references last week and again used in Section II show fellowship with God and all indicate a conscious existence immediately after our death.

Christian mortalism incorporates the belief that the human [soul](#) is not naturally [immortal](#); and may include the belief that the soul is uncomprehending during the time between [bodily](#) death and [resurrection](#), known as the [intermediate state](#). "Soul sleep" is an often used term so the more neutral term "materialism" was also used in the nineteenth century, and "Christian mortalism" since the 1970s. The other belief of life after death include [universal reconciliation](#), where all souls are immortal and eventually are reconciled, and [salvation](#). None of this is scripturally taught or believed in Baptist doctrine.

Luke 16:19-31

19 There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. ²⁰ At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores ²¹ and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. ²⁴ So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' ²⁵ "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.' ²⁷ "He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, ²⁸ for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' ²⁹ "Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.' ³⁰ "No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' ³¹ "He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

- Clear reference that when one dies, their soul immediately leaves to one of two places, Hades or Heaven
- Clear reference to the "saved" and "unsaved", thus refuting any doctrine of universal salvation
- There is slight reference to the fact that the soul of a dead person has some ability to "see" other spirit places and earth; Begs the question of whether our loved ones who have died can see us?

Present-day defenders of soul sleep include the [Seventh Day Adventist church](#), [Jehovah's Witnesses](#), [Christadelphians](#), and others.

IV. Group Questions:

1. Do you believe that your loved ones who have previously died have an ability to see and observe things on earth? In heaven, whichever they are not in? Why or why not?
2. I want you to revisit our discussion last week concerning the issue of Christ's death to cover our sins past, present and future verses the concept of Purgatory or some type of "requirement to remove sin from the soul" before our presence in heaven before God?
3. How do you interpret Revelations 6:9-11 with respect to where this happens and the souls of those who have died for Christ?
4. Discuss the doctrine of Christian mortalism and universal reconciliation, why are these so dangerous to our core Christian Doctrines?