

## SALT & LIGHT (A CHRISTIAN JOURNAL)

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## False Assurance :: John 11:25–26 Misconstrued

An “Altar Call” is an appeal to hearers who have not already done so to make a decision. In most cases, the success of an Altar Call depends primarily upon emotion and peer pressure. Some Protestant Preachers of the past, the most notable being Johnathan Edwards in the first half of the Eighteenth Century, are famous for the depth of emotional response they were able to generate in the course of a sermon.

At the close of his sermon of 05 January A.D. 2024, a prominent American Protestant Pastor, in his Sunday sermon which is broadcast live over the Internet, made an Altar Call based upon his interpretation of John 11:25–26. However, his interpretation of the passage was seriously in error. Because the man did not understand what the passage is teaching, the assurance he gave, telling his congregation, “*We never die,*” is false. Indeed, with his false assurance, the Pastor denies the reality that every man shall die, and he obscures the profound truth, that Christ Jesus is the Resurrection, even the Life.

This post is a critique of that Altar Call of the 5th of January. The critique originally was conveyed to the Pastor via e-mail.

*Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection, and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?* – John 11:25–26 (KJV)

*Jesus said to her, I am the Resurrection, even the Life. The one believing in me, though he die, he shall live. And everyone living, even the ones believing in me, certainly never shall die, unto the ages. Believe you this?*

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## 1 False Assurance

In the closing minutes of your message of Sunday the 5th of January, you say, “*... a child of God never dies, you know. He's just changed addresses. That's what Jesus said: 'Whosoever believeth in me shall never die.' We never die.*”

You cite the dialogue between Jesus and Martha, recorded in John 11:25–26. But the assurance you gave is false. Jesus did *not* say that we (Christians) never die.

Indeed, when the utterance of Jesus to Martha is properly translated and understood, it is seen as a declaration that every man shall die, together with the promise, made to the Justified, of resurrection to *Life Everlasting*.

As to a change of address, until the Day of the Resurrection, the new address of everyone who dies is the Grave. Those who enter the *Way of Life* and persist in the *Way* until death shall be raised from the Dead to *Life Everlasting*; these ever after shall be with Christ Jesus.<sup>1</sup> Of course, not everyone who thinks himself to be a Christian actually enters the *Way of Life*; for these, the Grave is the final destination and permanent residence.

## 2 The Inevitable Problem of Death

Jesus begins his conversation with Martha by declaring, “*I am the Resurrection, even the Life.*” The great problem faced by Man is that every Man eventually shall fall captive to Death. The Scripture teaches that Death effectively ends the existence of the individual. Death cannot be avoided. Escape from Death is a problem which, apart from the intervention of the Lord God, is insoluble.

Christ Jesus, as “*the Resurrection, even the Life,*” is the sole means by which Man may be delivered from the incarceration of Death. Accordingly, the Resurrection, which is the very Cornerstone of the Christian Faith, is the confidence of the Justified of every age of history.

And, yes, all of the Justified—Adam and the Woman, Noah and Shem, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses, David, and all the rest—shall stand in the Resurrection, for all of them retroactively were made partakers of the New Covenant. Though some of them enjoyed the relationship of the Old Covenant, the Old Covenant could not provide benefit beyond the Grave. In faith, the Justified looked forward to the implementation of the New Covenant, which was inaugurated by the death of the Lamb of God, Jesus, in the Role of *Covenant Sacrifice*.

### 2.1 Death is a Realm of Inertness

The Grave is a realm utterly devoid of animation. In the Grave there is neither thought nor activity. Even the Justified, who died in confidence of resurrection, are portrayed as asleep, awaiting resurrection. In the Grave, the Wicked, the Oppressor, and the Master are impotent; consequently, the Weary, the Prisoner, and the Servant are at rest.<sup>2</sup>

*Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.*  
—Psalm 146:3–4

*What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?*  
—Psalm 30:9

*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.*  
—Ecclesiastes 9:5

*Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?*  
—I Corinthians 15:51–55

<sup>1</sup>John 12:26, John 14:3.

<sup>2</sup>Job 3:11–19.

## 2.2 From the Captivity of Death there is No Escape

Apart from the Resurrection, Death is an inescapable prison and an unconquerable foe.

*What man is he that liveth, and shall not see Death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the Grave?*

—Psalm 89:48

*And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church; and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.*

—Matthew 16:18

In this verse, the Greek word which the English Bible translates as “Hell” is **ades**, which means the Grave or Death, portrayed as a strong citadel or an unconquerable foe. The Gates of the Grave indeed prevail against all of those who are not of the Church of Christ Jesus.

## 2.3 Fear Generated by the Threat of Death Empowers Rulers

The governments devised by Man maintain control over their subjects ultimately by the threat of Death. But the sacrifice of Jesus frees the Justified from the bondage of Caesar, because the Justified have confidence in the Resurrection. From the standpoint of position, God the Father removes the Justified from the dominion of Caesar and places them in the Kingdom of Christ Jesus.

*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might bring to naught **him that had the power of death, that is, the slanderer** (Greek, **diabolos**); and deliver them who through fear of Death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*

—Hebrews 2:15

*So that we may boldly say, **The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.***

—Hebrews 13:6

*And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

—John 6:40

*Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: **Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.***

—Colossians 1:12–13

The Scripture uses a variety of descriptive terms when referring to human government, among them:

- “him that hath the power of Death”
- the “slanderer” or “false accuser” (Greek, **diabolos**, typically transliterated “Devil”)
- “adversary” (Greek, **satanas**, typically transliterated “Satan”)
- “*the power of darkness*”

In particular, the Protestant has misconstrued the term **diabolos** and **satanas** as designations of a “fallen” creature of the Angelic Realm, which they call “the Devil” or “Satan.” That error, combined with a blatant (and likely purposeful) blunder in the translation of the *Gospel Account of Matthew*,<sup>3</sup> the Protestant misconstrues the municipal dump of the city of Jerusalem for a place of everlasting torture by flame and maggots, which place they call “Hell.” And though the Christian is troubled by adversaries and false accusers, they all are human. But Satan or the Devil, fallen angels, Hell, and everlasting torture are imaginary, and merely the stuff of Talmudic Jewish myth.

<sup>3</sup>Matthew 10:28.

## 2.4 Destruction is Associated with Death

Man is a chemical organism (“dust”), subject to decay or corruption. Man is animated by a non-sentient animating spirit (“spirit of life” or “breath of life”) which is imparted by the Lord God, upon birth with the first inhale:

*And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the spirit of life; and man became a living soul.*  
— Genesis 2:7

Upon Death, the animating spirit returns to the Lord God, and the chemical organism decomposes into the elements of which it is constituted:

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

Thus, Death ends the conscious existence of the creature. All that remains of the individual is the record of personality, memories, and character, which is preserved in the animating spirit, which is non-sentient.

## 2.5 Regarding the Protestant Notion That Man is an “*Immortal Soul*”

*And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the Tree of Life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the Tree of Life.*  
— Genesis 3:22–24

*I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebutable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.*  
— 1 Timothy 6:13–16

The Scripture declares that, just as there is a natural body, so also there is a spirit body,<sup>4</sup> thus showing that the Resurrection is essential to existence beyond the Grave. In resurrection, Jesus appeared to the disciples in bodily form, inviting them to touch him, and stating that “*a spirit hath not flesh and bones*”:

*And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them.*  
— Luke 24:37–43

The existence of the individual is the existence of the body, whether that body is a mortal body of the Natural Realm or an immortal body of the Spirit Realm. The individual has no existence apart from a body, for the body and the individual are one and the same. Mortal or immortal, the body is animated by a spirit which is bestowed by the Lord God. Faculties including thought, memory, sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and ambulation are provided by the organs and systems which constitute the body; this is true for the body of the Spirit Realm as well as for the body of the Natural Realm. Apart from the ear, there is no hearing; apart from the eye, there is no vision; apart from the brain, there is no thought.

According to the Protestant Pulpit, although the “*Immortal Soul*” resides in the body of flesh, the Soul is able to function independently of the body. But those claims are false. The concept of the “*Immortal Soul*,” though central to the Protestant Faith, is not supported by the Scripture. The concept is but one of many fictions of the Protestant, which are drawn from the myth of the Talmudic Jew.

<sup>4</sup>1 Corinthians 15:44.

## 2.6 Resurrection Requires Preservation of Identity

Several passages of Scripture, make apparent the fact that the animating spirit (which clearly is non-sentient) maintains a record of the identity (personality, memories, and character) of the individual to whom it is imparted. Note the use of the phrase “my spirit” by Jesus and Stephen:

*And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the spirit.*  
—Luke 23:46

*And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.*  
—Acts 7:59

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

The obvious purpose of the record maintained by the animating spirit is preservation of the identity of the individual upon Death, so that the identity may be conveyed to the body of resurrection.

## 2.7 Destruction of Identity Precludes Resurrection

Jesus warns that the Lord God is able to destroy the very identity of the individual, thereby precluding the possibility of resurrection.<sup>5</sup> In the metaphor employed by Jesus, the destruction is accomplished by casting the individual into a place known as Gehenna. A blunder (likely purposeful) in the English Bible of Tyndale (which, in essence, is the *King James Version*) has been the source of great regarding this matter.

In Old English, “hell” literally is a hole in the ground. Figuratively, “hell” represents the Grave or the state of the Dead. The Greek term corresponding to the English word “hell” is *ades*, which typically is transliterated “hades.” But *ades* does not appear in the passage. The word which does appear is *geenna*, which typically is transliterated “Gehenna.” Inexplicably (and suspiciously), the English Bible mistranslates *geenna* as “hell.”

The Greek word *geenna*, is the name commonly used for the Valley of the Sons of Hinnom. Gehenna served as the municipal dump of the city of Jerusalem. Flames and maggots always were present in Gehenna, their function being the utter destruction of combustible waste and animal carcasses. The fate of anything cast into Gehenna was complete and certain destruction. Gehenna portrays annihilation, not everlasting torture.

In the passage, the “soul” (Greek, *psuche*) is the identity of the individual. Jesus warns that the Lord God is able to destroy not only the body (Greek, *soma*), but also the identity of the individual. Of course, destruction of the identity is tantamount to annihilation, for apart from preservation of identity, resurrection is pointless.

Largely on the basis of the aforementioned botched translation, the Protestant has invented an elaborate fiction in which “Immortal Souls,” together with “fallen” angels are subjected to everlasting torture by a combination of flame and immortal “worms” (Greek, *skolex*, maggot). This absurd fiction has its basis in the myth of the Talmudic Jew.

## 3 A Correct Rendering of John 11:25–26

Here is a correct translation of the words of Jesus to Martha, together with the correct interpretation:

*Jesus said to her, I am the Resurrection, even (*kai*) the Life. The one believing in me, though he die, he shall live. And everyone living, even (*kai*) the ones believing in me, certainly never (*ou me*) shall die, unto the ages.*  
—John 11:25–26

- The Greek conjunction *kai* can mean “and” or “even”; context governs. In this passage, two instances of *kai* should be translated “even.”
- In Greek, a double negative (*ou* [the absolute negative] + *me* [not]) is used for emphasis; the combination may be rendered “certainly not” or “certainly never.”

<sup>5</sup>Matthew 10:28.

- The phrase “unto the ages” is the manner in which perpetuity is expressed in the Greek language; it may be rendered “never.”

Thus, Jesus is saying to Martha:

1. *I am the Resurrection, even the Life.* [Which is to say that Jesus is the solution to the problem of death.]
2. *The one believing in me, though he die, he shall live.* [Which is to say than the one believing in Jesus shall be resurrected from the Dead.]
3. *And the ones living [Those living beyond the Grave by virtue of the Resurrection, because they believed in Jesus.] certainly never shall die.* [Which is to say that those who have been Resurrected no longer are subject to death.<sup>6</sup>]

*Russell Lee Harris*

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<sup>6</sup>Luke 20:35–36.