

LANDMARKS AND LANDMINES-PART ONE

(THE NONIMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL)

Greetings and welcome to another hour in the study of God's word; today I'd like to talk to you about "Landmarks and Landmines." Most of us know what landmarks are: they're fixed objects, like survey **corner pins** or other objects such as an old tree, a large rock, a hill, or an old building that brings a person to a turning point and helps them find their way to a particular place nearby.

Now, providing you don't have a GPS device, and someone draws you a map with landmarks such as I just mentioned so you can reach a certain destination, but unbeknown to you someone cuts down the tree, or brings in heavy equipment to pulverize the large rock and level out the hill by pushing all the dirt into a low spot, and a demolition crew comes in and tares down the old building, then what? You're chances of reaching your destination would be made nearly impossible, wouldn't it? And so you can see that landmarks are very important in order for someone to find their way to a designated point.

And a landmine (better know today as **an** improvised explosive device, or IED) is a victim-triggered **explosive device** used in wartime. They're covered over with a little dirt and are intended to kill the person who's unfortunate enough to step on one. And if the landmine is big enough, it can even change or distort a landmark by making it unrecognizable. And normally landmines are undetectable even when using metal detectors, because most are made from plastic. And so, landmines are very difficult to find and meant to keep ones enemy from reaching his destination and accomplishing his mission by stopping him, literally in his tracks.

Now, in a spiritual sense, which of the two powers that are at war with each other in this world do you think would use landmarks and which would use landmines?

Well, knowing the two opposing sides in the great controversy as we do, it's a God of love and mercy that has given us a map pointing out the landmarks, and it's the devil that places his landmines strategically so as to destroy those landmarks; and us in the process, so that we will **never** find our way to those mansions Christ has gone to prepare for us.

And of course, all the landmarks that will get us to our destination in one piece are found in God's word, the Bible. And the devil's purpose is to change those landmarks by distorting and wresting the Scriptures from their true meaning.

And God, foreseeing that this would happen, inspired the apostle Peter to warn us of these things; but before we open God's holy book, let's pray and ask for the presence of the Holy Spirit. [PRAYER]

After explaining how this present world will be burned up when the Lord comes, Peter warns us of one of the devil's landmines before that time would come. Turn with me please to **2 Peter 3:13-16**. "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. And account (consider) that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

And so here we are given specific warning HOW we interpret what the Bible says.

Also in **2 Thessalonians 2:2** the apostle Paul warned the church of his day that there were letters floating around purported to be written by him, but they weren't, and not to be deceived by them.

And in **2 Corinthians 11:15** we're told that Satan has ministers that will fool people into thinking that they are ministers of righteousness when they're not.

And so, we need to understand that the landmines are out there, and we must be careful not to step on them.

Remember how I said that a landmine is a victim-triggered device used in wartime? Well, that's exactly what I think of when Peter said there would be those that would wrest the Scriptures to their **own** destruction, and unfortunately to the destruction of other unsuspecting souls.

Friends, we are at war! According to **Ephesians 6:12** we are in a spiritual battle, and even though other people may plant the landmines, we can trigger them when we don't go to the Scriptures for ourselves to know what the landmarks are.

And also, **we** don't want to be the ones planting those landmines; because we can do it unwittingly by thinking something is true, because someone we trust said so, when it's not at all what the Bible teaches. And if we're doing that, we'll not only blow ourselves up, but we can so destroy the landmarks in the process, that it may make it impossible for others, who are not spending quality time with God, to come to the knowledge of the truth.

That's why we have to examine everything we believe, everything we've been taught! We cannot trust our salvation to the pastor, the Bible teacher, a friend, a relative, a spouse, or anyone else. We can't even trust ourselves apart from God's word, because the Bible says, "there is a way that seems right unto a man, but the end thereof is the way of death."

And so, we must study the Bible with the aid of the Holy Spirit for ourselves, because it is for ourselves that we must answer to God someday. Because so and so said, **is not going to be a good enough answer** when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

This morning I want to begin a series of sermons dealing with certain landmarks that will lead us to the truth and to eternal life, and expose the errors that would prevent us from accepting these truths by carefully brushing off the dirt that have hidden many landmines from our view; that we might not step on them and end up blowing ourselves up and causing others to end up in the wrong place as well.

Jesus clearly indicated that there would be many people who would think they're on the right road, only to end up in a place they never intended to be.

Some of the saddest words ever spoken are recorded in **Matthew 7:21-23**; Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the **will** of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day (in that day when it's too late to change), Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Have you ever thought about how terrible it will be to hear these solemn words spoken to you? To think you're going to heaven when the Lord comes, only to be told you've been on the wrong road because

someone destroyed the landmarks that would have prevented you from having these words apply to you, will be a very, very shocking experience indeed.

You see; these aren't hypocrites Jesus was referring to that would one day say "Lord, Lord", but those who are deceived. That's the terrible thing about deception, when you're deceived you don't know it!

But they could have known if they would have diligently searched the word of God for themselves; and so, we want to make sure it doesn't happen to us! By God's grace we need to make sure we don't step on the devil's landmines.

The landmark and landmine I'd like to talk about today is found in **Genesis 3:1-5**. Let's read that together. "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, let ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

You'll notice here that the serpent spoke a half-truth, didn't he? Because it's true that their eyes were opened to know good and evil, but the lie was that they could do what God said not to do and still continue to have life.

Tell me, did Adam and Eve die that day? Yes they did. They died spiritually, because an animal had to have its blood shed in order to atone for their sin. Notice what it says in **verse 21** of this same chapter— Gen. 3:21, "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them."

I think you will agree with me that something had to die in order for our first parents to be clothed with "coats of skins," right? And so, here we have the plan of salvation being put into action by the death of an animal, which represented the death of Christ, who would one day come and sacrifice His own life that we might be forgiven our sins just as Adam and Eve were forgiven of theirs.

This was a plan, by the way, that was formulated long before this world was created. Notice what it says in **1 Peter 1:18-20**. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained" In other words, Jesus was appointed in advance to be our Saviour. "foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last time for you."

And so, right there at the beginning, a way was made sure that we could be forgiven for our sins and given another chance.

In **1 John 2:1** it says that Jesus is our advocate, or our lawyer; and the job of a lawyer is to do **what he can** to get us off the hook and give us **another chance** to show our loyalty to God's commandments instead of continuing in disobedience.

And that's what God's desire is for each one of us. He's "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). And true repentance is not only feeling sorry for your sin, but **also** to turn away from that sin. In other words, if we come to God with true repentance, He will then give us the desire and the power to stop committing sin.

But I want you to notice what the landmark and the landmine are in what we read a few moments ago in Genesis 3. God told Adam and Eve not to eat of the fruit of the tree that was in the midst of the garden on pain of death, and the serpent said to Eve that she **could** eat and not die—not experience death.

You see, not only did Adam and Eve die spiritually the very moment they ate of the forbidden fruit, but they began to die physically as well. They began to grow old that very moment, and it eventually led them to the grave.

And so, even though they were forgiven of their sin and given another chance, the consequence of physical death was still the result of their disobedience, and that sentence is still being carried out today.

Romans 5:12 says, “by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

And so, we’re all in the same boat, aren’t we? Physical death is something we will all experience, even though spiritual death can find a remedy through the sacrifice of Christ.

And so, according to **Genesis 3**, God’s landmark is that eternal death is the result of disobedience to His commandments, and the devil’s landmine is that life continues on forever even though one disobeys what God has plainly said. And if you haven’t **yet** recognized it, this is where the teaching of the immortality of the soul comes from. That there is some part of the human being that lives on after they die.

And I know that by refuting this teaching, many of you may have a hard time accepting a different understanding of this, but I hope you’ll hear me out rather than tune me out, because all I’m presenting this morning is what the Bible says.

Hollywood has made billions and billions of dollars making movies about the supernatural, and ghosts, and spirits, and communication with the dead, and haunted houses, and zombies, and so forth; and they have the devil to thank for all their riches, because it all comes from the first lie that originated right there in the Garden of Eden when the serpent said to Eve, “ye shall not surely die.” Amazing, but true.

When the serpent said, “ye shall not surely die”, that was the first sermon ever preached on the immortality of the soul. “The soul that sinneth, it shall die,” as it says in (Ezekiel 18:20), is made to mean: “The soul that sinneth, it shall not die, but live eternally”, and nearly the whole world has stepped on this landmine.

Nine times out of 10, when you go to a funeral service, the preacher has the one who died already up in heaven, don’t they? If not that, they’re in some intermediate place like purgatory waiting for the priest to pray them into heaven, as long as they’re given enough money from their loving relatives.

But friends, the Bible knows of no such doctrine, period! There is no life apart from the body, that’s why the New Testament places so much emphasis upon the resurrection of the dead when Jesus returns to this earth.

The word death means cessation of life, but the devil would like you to believe that eternal death means separation from God and life in some other place, and people end up believing the same lie the devil told Eve—“ ye shall not surely die.”

I got a knock at my back door one day, and it happened to be a Baptist man who wanted to invite me to his church, and that began what turned out to be about a half hour discussion; and one of the topics we

discussed had to do with the state of the dead. He of course, being a Baptist, believed that when one dies they go immediately to heaven or hell; and so I asked him if he was familiar with what Jesus told His disciples just before He ascended to heaven, and he wasn't sure, so I quoted **John 14:1-3** to him.

I told him Jesus said to His disciples, "let not your heart be troubled, you believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and (do what? I said to him) and he said, "receive you unto myself, that where I am there you may be also." (He was familiar with the verse)

And I waited for his response, because I could see his wheels turning. And as he was in deep thought I said, "Why would Jesus say to His disciples that they would be with Him where He is, once He returned, if they went to be with Him when they died?"

And he said, "You know, I never thought about that before in connection with these verses." You see, this Baptist man had stepped on the devil's landmine just as the majority of Christians have, but friends, it's a lie! And the Garden of Eden is where this lie originated; and from that time to this, so many people have stepped on this landmine, that the landmark is totally unrecognizable except by a close examination of the Scriptures. And that's what we want to do this morning: let's take our Bibles and brush the dirt off the devil's landmine so we can avoid stepping on it.

Turn with me please to **1 Timothy 6:16**, The context of this verse is speaking of God, and it says, "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."

According to Strong's Bible concordance, which is a Hebrew and Greek dictionary of the words in the Bible, immortality is "deathlessness." If God is the only one who has immortality, that means that He is the only one who cannot die.

Also, Webster's dictionary says, immortality is "having life or being that shall never end." And so, the Bible makes it very clear that immortality is something only God possesses.

Now let's look at another verse in **1 Timothy 1:17**. "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

So, there is no question that God is the **only** one who has immortality. That being true, then if we want to be immortal, we have to get it from Him; does that make sense? We can't give ourselves something that is not inherent within ourselves. We have to get it from outside of ourselves, and that place is from God.

So, if we can only receive immortality from God, when do we get it?

- Do we have an immortal soul when we are born into this world as a baby?
- Do we get it when we accept Jesus as our Savior?
- Do we get it when we partake of the divine nature as it says in **1 Peter 1:4**?
- Do we get it when we're born again, as Jesus told Nicodemus in **John 3:7**?

- Or do we get it at some other time?

I think it's evident from what most Christians believe today, that one has an immortal soul when they're born into this world as an infant; and depending upon whether or not they're born again when they accept Christ into their life, they either spend eternity in heaven or they burn forever in the eternal flames of hell.

But is this true? And is there a part of us that is immortal right now as I speak?

Someone told me one time that once you've been born you can't be unborn, meaning once you've been born again you can't be lost by being unborn. And I said it's true that you can't be unborn, but you can die, can't you?

You see, just as you were physically born, you can physically die; and the same holds true in a spiritual sense. When we accept Jesus as our Savior, we have eternal life, because the One who is eternal lives within.

But, eternal life is not the same as immortality; do you see the difference? We can forfeit eternal life by disobedience, but immortality can never be taken away because it means that we can never die.

Let me say it another way: Just as Adam and Eve died spiritually when they sinned, so do we when we knowingly disobey God as they did. Adam and Eve had eternal life when they were created, didn't they? Sure they did, because they never would have died if they had never disobeyed, but they weren't immortal, because they were on probation to see if they would be faithful to do what God said.

And that tree in the midst of the Garden was their test, but they failed the test; and as a result they were not given immortality; they were not made so that could never die; and we are on probation as well. Just as Adam and Eve had to acknowledge their guilt to be forgiven, so the blood of that animal, which represented the blood of Christ, could cleanse them of their sin and once again give them right standing with God; so we must do the same when we sin.

In other words, every time we sin, we have to be born again, again. Does that make sense? Every time we sin, we lose eternal life, because Jesus, who is eternal life, cannot abide in the heart where sin dwells. Jesus and sin cannot abide in the same heart at the same time, that's impossible! When we sin we lose the presence of God, and by losing His presence we lose what He has, eternal life.

Turn with me to **1 John 3:7-9** John says, "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he (Christ) is righteous." In other words, the person who is right with God does what is right, just as Christ did what was right. Verse 8, "He that committeth sins is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." And of course God wants to destroy the works of the devil in your heart and in mine. Then in verse 9, John says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because is if born of God."

So as long as the divine seed that was planted in your heart when you accepted Christ remains in you, you will not sin because Jesus and sin cannot occupy the same heart at the same time. If we choose not to abide in Christ, sin is going to happen.

So, depending upon how we live will determine whether or not we have the abiding presence of Jesus, and thus whether or not we have eternal life. Because **1 John 5:12** says, "He that has the Son has life, and he that has not the Son of God has not life." And that's talking about eternal life.

This idea that we still have eternal life even while we are sinning: that we're still a child of God, rather than a child of the devil as the Bible says, has its origin in the words of the serpent when he said, "ye shall not surely die."

Isn't it absolutely absurd to think that God is going to let us into heaven for doing the same thing the devil and his angels were cast out of heaven for? Would that even make sense? The devil was kicked out for disobedience; is God going to let us in if we're disobedient? No! A thousand times no!! That's just not going to happen.

The Bible is very clear that we must be overcomers if we would enter heaven at last. If we're not overcoming sin, sin is overcoming us! And if sin is overcoming us, it means that the devil is our master. And if the devil is our master, then we're going to be consumed by the same fire that consumes him when the Holy City descends out of heaven from God, as it says in **Revelation 20:9-10**.

But friends, that doesn't have to be our fate; the apostle Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13). Do the words "all things" include stop sinning? Yes!

In **John 14:15** Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments." And since **1 John 3:4** tells us that sin is a violation of the commandments, what is He asking us to do if we love Him? Stop sinning! "Keep My commandments."

If it wasn't possible for us to do that, then why does Jesus make obedience to His commandments the proof that we love Him? You see; Jesus cannot cover your sin while you continue in sin, but there is a way out! God always gives us a way out, and it's up to us to take it.

Just because you have sinned does not mean you've placed yourself beyond help. That's the wonderful thing about the gospel!

Notice what **Isaiah 27:5** says to the sinner: this is what God says, "Let him take hold of **My** strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me." Do you want to have peace with God? Then take hold of His strength! Why? Because you have none of your own. If you take hold of His strength, He will give you power to overcome.

In **Jude 24** it says the Holy Spirit has power to keep us from falling back into sin once we've been pulled out. And so, there's no excuse for sin to the one who takes hold of the strong for strength.

Now getting back to our subject: if we don't receive immortality when we're born into this world as a baby, or when we receive Christ into our life, when do we receive it? When do we come to the place where we will never die?

Well, I'll answer that question in a moment, but first we need to find out what the Bible says our condition is as long as we are living on this earth. Turn with me to **Romans 6:12**. Paul says, "Let not sin therefore reign (as a ruling king) in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."

Also **Romans 8:11**, "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

So, what kind of bodies do we have? Mortal bodies! Bodies that can die! But what about the soul? Is that mortal too? Notice what Jesus said in **Matthew 10:28** “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

This verse makes it perfectly clear that the soul is not naturally immortal, because it can be destroyed in hell, agreed? To destroy doesn't mean to go on living! But you say, it sounds to me like the body and soul are separate entities; what's the difference? We'll, it all has to do with the way the word is used, but we'll talk about that in a minute.

But first lets allow the Bible to tell us when we can expect to receive immortality. (And by the way, the wicked never receive immortality. They never do, because they will die eternally) In other words, they will be destroyed and never live again, not here on earth, not in heaven, and not in the fires of hell. The wicked will be punished according to the deeds done in the body, but after punishment is meted out, they will die and never live again.

But when does the Christian receive immortality? **1 Corinthians 15:51-55** “Behold, I show you a mystery (this was a secret the Corinthians didn't understand, & hear Paul explains); We shall not all sleep” We shall not all die. There are 73 references in the Bible to death as a sleep, but we'll have to cover that another time. “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 (bodies that are imperishable), and this mortal must put on immortality.” When? On resurrection morning. We do not have an immortal soul that flits off to heaven or hell when we die. Immortality is given at the last trump. And that last trumpet blast takes place at the resurrection when Jesus returns. You can read about that in 1 Thess. 4:13-17. But let me continue on with verse 54. “So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then (and not before) 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?” Can it be any clearer?

Just as it did with Adam, it takes the life giving breath of God and a physical body to make a living soul, or a living person, because that's what a soul is! You see; it would be better to say we don't have a soul we are a soul.

Notice what it says in **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.”

What was Adam before God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life? He was a dead soul, or a dead person. There was a body, but there was no life in it. So when Adam became a living soul, what happened to him when he died? **Psalms 146:2-4** “While I live will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being. Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man (not speaking of Jesus—just a typical person), in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish”

Look at it this way; if you have a hammer, nails, and a pile of boards, you can make a box. But when you take the claw of that hammer and pull out the nails and put things in separate piles again, what happened to the box? It ceased to exist, didn't it?

Well, it's the same way with a person: only when you have a body connected with the breath of life from God do you have a living soul, or a living person; and when those elements are separated the soul dies.

You see, your soul is simply who you are as a person. It's your character, your personality, your thoughts, and your feelings. It's who you have become while you lived. That's what God preserves when you die, but there's no life in it. When Jesus comes back to raise the dead, who you have become while you lived will once again be reunited with a glorified body and you will live again and never die, but during the time you were dead, you knew nothing, your thoughts perish during that time just as Psalm 146:4 says.

Are you beginning to see this immortal soul landmine more clearly as we have brushed off some of the dirt? There are a whole host of reasons why the devil wants you to step on this landmine, because by believing the soul is immortal, it will lead you to step on several other landmines that are associated with it. For instance, if the soul is immortal, then a place has to be created for that soul to go on living once the body dies. And if it doesn't go to heaven, where does it go? It has to go somewhere; and so an eternal place of torment in the fires of hell has been created for that unfortunate soul that the Bible does not teach. This is another landmine the devil has buried beneath the dirt for unsuspecting people to step on, but we'll have to talk about this landmine another time.

Also, if the immortal soul goes on living somewhere after the body dies, why shouldn't it be able to communicate somehow with those who are still living? And so, the devil has to bury another landmine for people to step on through spiritualism, and ghosts, and spirits, and supernatural phenomenon, and ouija boards, and palm reading, and tarot cards, and séances, and on and on.

But think about this friend, if the soul is **not** immortal, but has to wait for Jesus to come and raise the dead back to life again, who or what do people communicate with when they speak to what they believe to be their dead loved one? And what if that spirit tells them to do something, believing it to be a message from that loved one in heaven? Wouldn't they tend to believe it, and carry out whatever that spirit might tell them to do?

You've probably heard on the news about people committing horrific acts because they thought some spirit told them to do it. It's a dangerous thing to disregard the Bible when it says not to try to communicate with the dead, because you're not communicating with the dead, but with evil spirits. We read about this in **Isaiah 8:19**, but I'll let you do that yourself because we're running out of time today. But check it out—Isaiah 8:19—and also verse 20.

Let's look at a couple more verses in the Bible about the soul before we close. Actually before we do that, I should tell you that the word "soul" in both Hebrew and Greek, means "life, person, living creature, breath (as in the breath of life), or life principle." It even covers the emotions and feelings. And it's used hundreds of times in the Bible in these various ways, but never with the idea that it's an entity that survives the body after death.

We don't have time to go into great detail about this today, but we'll look at a few texts. If anyone would like a more detailed study about these things, just drop me a short note and ask for the booklet titled, *What is a Soul?* There **are** a few texts in the Bible that make it sound like the soul is immortal, but there are clear explanations for these texts that are brought out in the booklet. You'll find the address and email on the CD your listening to.

All right, let's turn in our Bibles to several verses to get an idea of how the word soul is used. Go with me to **Genesis 12:5** "And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the **souls** that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came." "The souls they had gotten in Haran" are the people Abram added to his company and to his faith as he traveled toward Canaan. That's all it means. Abram was a witness for the Lord wherever he went and souls were added to him.

Go also to **Genesis 1:20** “And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.” The words “the moving creatures that have life” are what we want to focus on here, because the word “life” is the same as the Hebrew word “soul” in what we just read in Genesis 12:5. The word soul is always associated with life, not death.

Go also to **1 Kings 17:21, 22** “And he (Elijah) stretched himself upon the child three times,” You see, this child had died, but we don’t have the time to read the rest of the story. “He stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child’s **soul** come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the **soul** of the child came into him again, and he revived.”

I want you to think about this for a minute: if the soul is immortal and this child was enjoying the bliss of heaven, wouldn’t it have been a dirty trick to call him back to this sin cursed earth to live out the rest of his life here?

And here’s another thing to think about: there are 8 or 9 instances in the Bible when people were raised from the dead, and not one of them had anything to say about their experience in heaven or hell during that time. Why? Because they were dead. The idea that one can die and come back to life and have nothing to say about what they experienced just doesn’t make sense. Or for God to bring the dead back to life where they were enjoying heaven, only to live out the rest of their life here and then die again sometime in the future doesn’t make sense either; God has a much better plan, but I’ll have to tell you about that another time.

When the Bible says “the child’s soul came into him again” simply means LIFE came back into him again.

Go also to **Acts 27:37** The apostle Paul says, “And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen **souls**.” Here in the New Testament we’re told that there were 276 souls on the ship, and it’s not talking about disembodied spirits, is it? No, just simply 276 people.

Go also to **Matthew 2:19, 20** “But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child’s life.” Here in this verse we have the word “life”, and it’s the same Greek word translated “soul” in Acts 27:37 which we read previously.

Go also to **Revelation 16:3** where the apostle John says, “And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living **soul** died in the sea.” Here we see that even the creatures of the sea have souls, which simply means they have life.

Now with this little bit of knowledge, let’s take another look at what Jesus said in **Matthew 10:28**. “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

If you replace the word “soul” with “life” as the Bible does about 40 times elsewhere, it makes perfect sense. In other words, there’s no need to fear the one who can take away this temporal life by destroying your body, because they can’t take away your eternal life, God is the only One that can do that. So, contextually, the soul here represents not just life, but eternal life, and the body represents this temporal life. And so if the soul can be destroyed in the fires of hell, it cannot be immortal.

Well, we could spend hours and hours looking at similar verses, because there are literally hundreds of them in the Bible, but I'm pretty sure you get the idea. Never forget it, the word soul always has to do with life, and not life after death in a spirit form while the body molds in the grave.

There are spirits out there, and there is a spirit world, but it's made up of fallen and unfallen angels, not human beings that have died. The non-immortality of the soul is what the Bible teaches, and it is a landmark that will help us reach our destination without getting blown up by the devils landmine.

Next time we'll take a look at another one of the devils landmines that nearly the whole Christian world has stepped on; and just as we've done this time, we'll take the words of Jesus, the Great Physician, and patch them up by applying the bandages, and the splints, and the eye salve of God's word to their wounds.

And so, until then may the Lord bless you and keep as you think about these things and as you take the time you need to verify them by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

Let's pray. [PRAYER].