

FAKE NEWS

If you've been listening to the news lately, and I do think we should be aware of what's going on in the world, you've been hearing a lot about fake news. The Republicans and Democrats have both been blaming the media and different Internet websites and social media for putting out stories that are calculated to make one side or the other look good or bad depending on which one they support. There's alleged Internet hacking and cyber attacks from foreign governments that have supposedly rigged the Presidential election, and who knows for sure what the real truth is. The spin doctors have been very busy trying to slant the news in their favor depending on who they support and what agenda they want to see go forward, and ethical journalism is all but dead in America. And as I got to thinking about all this, I thought, "Isn't it just like the devil to so confuse the truth that people have an almost impossible task of sorting out the good news from the fake news?"

In the political world I'm not sure it's possible to know what the truth is, but fortunately in the spiritual world we have a more sure word of prophecy that will expose all the fake news that Satan has been so busily injecting into the world and all the various churches since he deceived our first parents in the Garden of Eden, and especially has this been true for the past 200 years or so, from the inception of the great Advent awakening and to the present time.

Now, I know some of you who are listening to me right now, whether by CD or the Internet, are not Seventh-day Adventists, and I make no apologies when I say that the truth for these last days has its roots in the great Advent movement that began in the early 1800s, and I think it's important for both Seventh-day Adventists and those of other denominations to be aware of the inroads the devil has made within the various churches and what the reasons are for Satan's sinister designs behind those inroads.

In the book of Amos there are a couple sobering verses that warn of a day that I believe is very near. We need to understand that we are living in the last days of this earth's history and the time is coming when many will mourn over the fact that they didn't take advantage of the freedom and opportunity they had to study and understand what the Bible teaches.

Please turn with me in your Bible to **Amos 8:11, 12**. Here's what it says, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it."

These inspired words refer to the close of human probation just before the Lord comes, but before that happens there's a process where it becomes more and more difficult to find the truth spoken and presented by those who profess to have it, and I believe we are living at that very time right now, because it's very difficult today to find a church whose leaders are preaching the word of God in its purity. And because this is true, we need to be vigilant and study God's

word more diligently than ever before so we're not fooled and come up to the time when the prophecy of Amos is fulfilled and our opportunity to know the truth is forever hidden from our eyes.

I'm sorry to have to tell you this, but nearly all the churches today are following the fake news the devil has been promoting for many centuries, and these errors have been around for so long that people take it for granted that they're true. Many ministers of another gospel are so skilled at wresting the Scriptures that they can make it appear that black is white and white is black; that sweet is bitter and bitter is sweet; that good is evil and evil good, and in **Isaiah 5:20** God told us that this would be the case. And notice also what it says in **2 Corinthians 11:14, 15**. Paul said "No marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness."

Here we see that Satan has ministers who are really ministers of sin, but people are fooled into thinking they're ministers of righteousness. And so we've been warned long ago about the devil's fake news, haven't we? The father of lies is the father of all the fake news that's circulating around the world today, both in the political and the religious world, and as far as the religious world is concerned, we want to make sure that we're in the business of exposing this fake news and not adding to it.

So, what is some of this fake news that nearly all the churches teach today? And why or how could this fake news cause us to lose eternal life? We're not going to go into great detail on each point, but I'll give you enough to stir up your pure minds, and then you can study further into it on your own. All the fake news I'll be exposing today are closely related to each other, and several of them lead one into the other, and you'll see what I mean as we go along.

I would say at the top of the list of fake news in the religious world is Sunday sacredness and the desecration of the seventh-day Sabbath. Talk about turning the tables on the truth and putting light for darkness and darkness for light, this is it! There's not even one verse of Scripture that designates Sunday as a holy day, and yet several billion professed Christians around the world believe it to be so, when the Bible testifies that Sunday is nothing more than one of the six common working days.

By the way, do you think maybe that's why the fourth commandment in **Exodus 20:8** begins with the word "Remember"? Do you suppose God knew people would forget? The word "Remember" is there for a reason and it's just as inspired as the rest of the words in the fourth commandment. The word "Remember" is really a prophecy when you think about it, because God knew ahead of time that the devil would try to supplant a fake day of worship in place of the true.

Most Christians have been taught that the seventh-day Sabbath was given to the Jews, and so they call it the Jewish Sabbath, but this is fake news as well, because the Sabbath was instituted 2500 years before there was a Jewish nation. Read **Genesis 2:2, 3** and you'll see that the seventh day of creation week was blessed and sanctified, that is, set apart for holy use right there in the

beginning. And not only that, but it turns out that the enforcement of a Sunday law in the near future will also fulfill the prophecies of **Revelation 13 and 14** as they deal with the mark of the beast, the persecution of those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus, and finally a death decree for all those who resist the powers that be.

We don't have time to go into detail about this topic today, but the beast is the papacy. All the Protestant reformers of the 16th century understood and believed this, but today the Protestant churches don't even know what they're supposed to be protesting. And the mark of the beast is the day the papacy has designated as a replacement for the true Sabbath. History confirms this and the papacy itself admits that this is what they've done, and despite this fact, nearly all the Protestant churches today are going after this child of the papacy like the children of Hamlin Germany followed the Pied Piper.

So how can Sunday keeping and Sabbath breaking cause me to lose eternal life? Well, it's very simple. The seventh-day Sabbath is one of the Ten Commandments, or a part of the law of God, and **1 John 3:4** says that the transgression of that law results in sin. Then you put that together with **Romans 6:23** where it says, "The wages of sin is death", and that's eternal death, and you have your answer as to why breaking the Sabbath will cost you dearly in the end. In fact, breaking any one of the Ten Commandments will cost you dearly in the end unless there's genuine repentance and confession so you can be forgiven, and then once forgiven the Lord requires obedience, or the penalty of death will come back upon you.

Another piece of fake news is the teaching that the soul is immortal, when again, there is not a single verse of Scripture to support this idea. So where did it come from? Well, just like all fake news, it came from the devil. The devil preached the very first sermon about the immortality of the soul to Eve in the Garden of Eden when he directly contradicted what God said. God told Eve that if she ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil she would die, but what did the serpent tell her? Go ahead Eve, eat, "You shall not surely die", and ever since that time people have been mixed up about death and immortality and to whom and when it will be given, and this error that the serpent perpetrated is still echoed from pulpits all across the land to this day.

1 Timothy 6:16 is very clear that God is the only one who has immortality, and **1 Corinthians 15:51-54** says the only people that are going to receive it are the righteous who come forth from the grave, and also those who are alive and translated without seeing death when the Lord comes the second time. So, if no one has immortality until that future time, how can the soul go straight to heaven or hell when one dies? Something is wrong with that picture.

Now think this through with me for a minute. According to the Bible it would be much more accurate to say that a person is a soul rather than a person has a soul. The idea that a soul can have existence apart from the body, or that it possesses an immortal essence, is foreign to the Bible. In fact, in **Matthew 10:28** Jesus taught that all the souls of the wicked will be destroyed along with the body in hell, so how can something that's immortal be destroyed? Again, there's something wrong with that picture.

The Bible clearly teaches that only those who accept Jesus as their Saviour will be granted eternal life and immortality. But there are many today who teach that those who reject the Lord will burn forever, and we'll talk more about that bit of fake news in a few minutes, but wouldn't burning forever in the flames of hell still be eternal life? You see dear friends, eternal life and eternal death are total and complete opposites, and no one is going to experience both at the same time, that's impossible! You are either going to live forever or you are going to be dead forever, and what you choose to do about Jesus is going to determine your outcome.

The Hebrew word "nephesh" is what's translated "Soul" in English, but that same word is translated many different ways throughout the Bible. Let's look at a few examples and spend a little time on this, because I think this is important. If an incorrect understanding of the soul can cause us to lose eternal life, I would say it's important, wouldn't you? So let's look at it.

The first time the word soul is used is **Genesis 2:7**, let's take a look. "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became (**what?**) a living soul." Here the word is used to simply indicate a living being, or a breathing creature as the Bible concordance defines it, and even animals are called souls in the Bible because they are breathing creatures also. Let's look at just one example of this in **Revelation**.

As you're finding your place there let me explain something. In the New Testament the word "peuche" (*psoo-khay'*) is the equivalent of the word nephesh in the Hebrew and has many of the same variety of meanings. So keep that in mind. **Revelation 16:3**, "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." And so, very clearly here, even creatures that live in the sea are called souls, why? Because they're breathing creatures or living beings of some kind.

Let's look at **Genesis 14:21** for another example, "And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself." The word "Persons" in this verse is the same Hebrew word used elsewhere as "Soul", and you find this all through the Bible.

In **1 Peter 3:20**, speaking of Noah's ark, it says, "Eight souls were saved by water." Same as eight persons saved by water.

1 Kings 17:21 "And he (Elijah) 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." Here the word soul simply means life, or the breath of life as when Adam was created. Let this child's life come back into him again.

1 Kings 19:4, "But he (**Elijah**) himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." The word "Life" is used here rather than soul, but both words are the same word in Hebrew.

Isaiah 46:2, “They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but **themselves** are gone into captivity.” The word “Themselves” here is used rather than souls, but again, in Hebrew either one can be used.

The word soul is even used to describe a person’s feeling and emotions, or what makes up the whole person. So as you can see, the Hebrew word nehpes, which is used nearly 1000 times in the Old Testament can be used in a variety of ways, but none of them with the idea that indicates something immortal. Same with the Greek word “peuche”, it’s used over 100 times in the New Testament in various ways, but never does it mean that the soul is immortal.

If you'd like more information about this you can go to my website at gospel-workers.com and look under the “Publications” tab for the article titled “What is a Soul”, and there will be lots more there for you to study and consider.

Now, before we move on, we've spent considerable time with this for a reason. Is it really all that important what one believes about the soul, and can a misunderstanding lead to deception and eternal loss? That's what we want to know; otherwise it's no big deal. I'd like to read you something from the book ***The Great Controversy*** because it will do a much better job of explaining this than I can. I'll be reading from **pages 551, 552**.

“The doctrine of man’s consciousness in death, especially the belief that spirits of the dead return to minister to the living, has prepared the way for modern spiritualism. If the dead are admitted to the presence of God and holy angels, and privileged with knowledge far exceeding what they before possessed, why should they not return to the earth to enlighten and instruct the living? If, as taught by popular theologians, spirits of the dead are hovering about their friends on earth, why should they not be permitted to communicate with them, to warn them against evil, or to comfort them in sorrow? How can those who believe in man’s consciousness in death reject what comes to them as divine light communicated by glorified spirits? Here is a channel regarded as sacred, through which Satan works for the accomplishment of his purposes. The fallen angels who do his bidding appear as messengers from the spirit world. While professing to bring the living into communication with the dead, the prince of evil exercises his bewitching influence upon their minds.

“He has power to bring before men the appearance of their departed friends. The counterfeit is perfect; the familiar look, the words, the tone, are reproduced with marvelous distinctness. Many are comforted with the assurance that their loved ones are enjoying the bliss of heaven, and without suspicion of danger, they give ear ‘to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.’”

Let's suppose one night one of your dead loved ones appears to you in your bedroom and tells you to do something you know is contrary to the Bible; are you going to do what they say, or are you going to do what the Bible says? For example, you now know that the seventh day is the Sabbath and that the Bible plainly teaches you to worship God on His special day, but what you

believe to be your departed loved one tells you that they just came from the throne of God and He wants you to know that that commandment has been changed and He now wants you to worship Him on Sunday. What are you going to do? Do you have the courage to ignore that advice, or do you start thinking that maybe you've been deceived on this point and go ahead and make the change from the seventh to the first day of the week? If you believe the soul is immortal and that your loved one is in heaven, there's a good chance you will do what that loved one says, but if you know the truth about what happens to people who die, that they are sleeping in the grave until the resurrection, and we'll talk more about that in a few minutes, you will have the courage to say to that evil spirit, because that's what it is, "Get thee behind me Satan, for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

And here's something else to think about. Why did those characters in the Bible who were raised from the dead have nothing to say about their experience in the flames of hell or the bliss of heaven? Of all those recorded in the Bible who were raised from the dead, they had absolutely nothing to say about what they experienced while they were dead. Don't you think that's odd? Anyway, wouldn't it have been a dirty trick to take someone that was enjoying heaven and bring them back to this sin cursed earth after an experience like that only to die again? Just something to think about.

You've probably heard many times over the years that one lie always leads to another, well it's true, and this is definitely the case with the teaching of the immortality of the soul. So let's think this through for a minute. If the soul is immortal, that means it has to go somewhere when the body dies, right? The word immortal means not subject to death, and so it has to go someplace; thus we have the invention of the teaching of an eternally burning hell for those that don't get to go to heaven. Again, with no Bible proof whatsoever, the fake news about an eternally burning hell has become universally taught and accepted by nearly everyone except atheists, and it all began with the false idea that every human being who comes into this world has an immortal soul, or is born with something that never really dies.

More than any other teaching, an eternally burning hell has probably created more atheists than anything else. To think that a loving God would burn people for all eternity simply because they did a few bad things during their three score and ten years upon this earth is more than many people can accept, and so they dismiss the idea of there being a God at all. And I have to tell you, if I thought the Bible taught such a horrific thing as that, I wouldn't serve a God like that either. The God I serve, and the God the Bible portrays is loving, just, and fair; and it's not loving, just, or fair to torture people for all eternity because they chose not to serve Him during the few years they lived upon this earth. That just doesn't make a bit of sense, and it doesn't make sense because it's not what the Bible teaches.

The testimony of Scripture is that fire is going to come down from God out of heaven shortly after the second resurrection of all the wicked, and they will all be devoured in the flames; that's going to be the real hell fire, but there's no such place that's burning today. You can read all about this in **Revelation 20** when you get the time. Also, do you remember reading about what

happened to Sodom and Gomorrah in **Genesis 19** and how those wicked cities were destroyed? It says God rained down fire and brimstone and consumed them, and we're told plainly in **Jude 7** that those two wicked cities are an example of what's going to happen in the end. Check it out! Sodom and Gomorrah suffered the vengeance of eternal fire we're told, but they're not still burning today, are they? No. The effects of the fire are eternal or unchangeable, but they're not still burning, and that's how it will be when fire destroys the wicked just before this earth is made new. The fire will do its job of cleansing the earth of sin and sinners, and when everything consumable has been consumed, it will go out. That's unquenchable fire. A fire that is unquenchable doesn't mean it will burn forever, it just means you can't put it out, but when everything that can burn is done burning, it will go out on its own. That's why **Malachi 4:1** says the wicked are going to come to ashes and that they'll burn up leaving them neither root nor branch, Satan the root and his followers the branches. That's also why **Psalms 37:20** says, "the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away."

By the way, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus was told by the Lord because it was a common misconception of the day to believe that people went to a place of torment when they died, and this fake news is still believed today. The point Jesus was making was not that the wicked go to hell when they die, but that a person's destiny is fixed at death and after that point nothing can be changed. There's a great gulf fixed between the living and the dead and once death comes we are forever sealed and our eternal destiny is what it is. The judgment is final and can never be altered; that's the point of the parable.

Also there is no purgatory from which one can be released sooner if they give money to a priest to pray for their departed loved one. All that will do is give the priest a little extra money to indulge his bad habits. The point we want to get from all this is that death is final, and we better make our calling and election sure while we're still living in this present world.

Well, there's a lot more that could be said about this subject, but we're going to have to move on. I'm just giving you a little something to think about and study as you have opportunity so you will know for yourself what you believe.

Another fake news story that's been floating around for many centuries is the teaching that some call eternal security, better known as once saved always saved. The devil would like every Christian to believe that once they accept Christ as their Savior they are eternally secure in that salvation and there's no way they can be lost, and no matter if they continue to commit sin, the blood of Christ still covers them and their connection to Jesus remains unbroken.

But let me tell you something, God will never save anyone against their will. He won't do it, because that would be to use force, and that's something God doesn't use to save people. Now what do I mean by that? Let me give you a hypothetical situation. Suppose a person accepts Christ as their Saviour and then later on they decide they want nothing to do with Christianity and they decide and choose to become a Muslim, become radicalized, join Isis and commit mass

murder. Is God going to allow a person like that in heaven simply because they accepted Christ sometime during their previous life? If a person believes that, then they're more deluded than they realize.

The truth is, if we continually abide in Christ we are continually in a saved condition, but if we knowingly commit sin we disconnect ourselves from the true vine and we wither and die; that's what Jesus taught in **John 15**.

There's an interesting two letter word in the Bible that makes this subject very clear, it's the word "if." The word "if" introduces a condition, doesn't it? Friends, we should never forget that the promises and the threatenings of God are alike conditional. Does that make sense? God doesn't promise eternal life without conditions. In **Romans 8:13, 14** Paul says, "If you live after the flesh, you shall die: but if through the Spirit you do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

So what if we're not led by the Spirit of God, what are we then? We are children of the devil, that's the only other option. **1 John 3:8** says, "He that commits sin is of the devil", and if we are of the devil, surely we cannot also be sons and daughters of God, and besides, there will be no children of the devil living in the earth made new, that I can tell you. There are no verses in the Bible that even remotely suggest that we can live like the devil and still be in a saving relationship with Jesus; it just doesn't work that way.

We don't have time to go into it this morning, but study the parables Jesus told and you'll discover that He taught that salvation is conditional upon obedience to the truth, and so did all the Bible prophets in both the Old and New Testaments. And so this false idea that once we accept Christ we've got it made no matter what is one of the biggest fake news stories ever told.

And by the way, this conditional truth also goes for churches and organizations. Just because God raises up a body of people to take a last day message to the world does not mean that they will always be God's people to accomplish that task. If that body of people, organization, denomination, or whatever you want to call it, does not fulfill the conditions given by God, others are then chosen. God has always worked on this principle. If you don't think so, consider the Jewish nation. When they crucified the Saviour God raised up others to take the gospel to the world, didn't He? And He will continue to work on this same principle until the job is done, and it will get done; the question is, will we be a part of it?

Another bit of fake news that's taught and believed by nearly all Christian churches is that Jesus did not have a fallen human nature like ours, and yet the Bible is very clear that He did. Let's just look at a few Bible texts that will prove the point and then we'll talk about why it's important to understand this correctly.

Genesis 5:1, "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him."

So, when Adam was created, he was created in the likeness of God, and that would be unfallen, right? Adam didn't experience a moral fall in his human nature until he deliberately disobeyed the command not to eat of the forbidden fruit. And so, he was created in the likeness of God. Now let's see how Jesus came into this world by comparison.

Romans 8:3, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."

So, Adam came into the world in the likeness of God, and Jesus came in the likeness of sinful flesh. Now I think everyone would have to admit that this made Adam and Jesus different on the human side somehow, wouldn't it? I think the reason most Christians reject the truth about Jesus having a sinful human nature is because they think that would have made Him a sinner, and they can't accept that because they know **Hebrews 4:15** says He was tempted in all point such as we are, yet without sin, but they reject the idea that He had a sinful human nature on a false assumption.

Just because Jesus had a fallen sinful human nature doesn't mean He gave in to it and committed sin. On the contrary, Jesus lived life the way we have to live it and was victorious; that's what makes Him our Savior. He came down to the level of those He wished to save and gave us an example of how living a life without sin in sinful flesh can be successfully accomplished. Now, having said that, please don't get the idea that Jesus was the same as us in all respects, for that cannot be. He was God and is God, but on the human side He had no advantage over those who have partaken of the divine nature, as it says in **2 Peter 1:4**. None!

He relied upon His Heavenly Father, a power outside of Himself. That's why, in **John 14:10** Jesus said, "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." And that's the same way we must deal with the temptations that come to us. "But", someone says, "Jesus had no sinful propensities", and that's true, but here's something else that's true. So long as we are united to Christ by faith, sin has no more dominion over us. That's what Paul said in **Romans 6:14**. So even though all of us have had sinful propensities, because we have all sinned, we need not retain one sinful propensity. As we partake of the divine nature and do what it prompts us to do, hereditary and cultivated tendencies to do wrong are cut away from the character. That's what conversion is all about; the things we once hated, we now loved; and the things we once loved, we now hate. That's what the Holy Spirit will do for everyone who submits to the divine will, rather than the fallen flesh.

So why is it important for us to understand this? Because dear friend, if you believe Jesus had to have an unfallen human nature in order to be able to resist temptation and keep from sinning, then how in the world can you do it with a fallen one? Do you see? If Jesus couldn't do it, how can we? And so if we believe this, the only conclusion we can possibly come to is, if God is going to save me, He's going to have to do it while I continue to sin, because it's impossible for me to stop. That's what the devil would like us to believe, because he knows if we come to this

conclusion we will be eternally lost, because God cannot save us if we continue to commit sin when we know better.

According to **1 John 3:10**, sinning or not sinning determines whether we belong to Jesus or the devil, it's just that simple. Don't take my word for it, read it for yourself. People that think God is going to save them in sin have no barrier against plunging headlong into perdition, because why even try to do what they believe is impossible? In other words, if you don't think you can overcome sin, the devil will make sure you don't. And as a result, many professed Christians can become more worldly than the truly worldly person, and all the while think that they're ready to meet Jesus in peace when He comes. What a colossal deception, and one that will be the downfall of millions. The correct understanding of the humanity of the Son of God is everything to us, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise. It's the golden chain that binds our souls to Christ and through Christ to our Father in heaven.

Let's look at a couple more verses of Scripture, because it's eternally important that we get this. **Hebrews 2:14-17**, "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 destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels (**which are unfallen. In other words, He didn't come like them in order to help them**); but he took on him the seed of Abraham (**The seed of Abraham was fallen, was it not?**). Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren (**like us**), that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."

Think for a minute of the ramifications of Jesus not being made like us in His humanity. If He did not come in the likeness of sinful flesh, He could not be a merciful and faithful high priest, and He could not make reconciliation for our sins, and the whole plan of salvation would be down the tubes.

Let's look at one more reference before we move on. **2 John verse 7**, "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."

The concordance defines the word flesh as "Human nature with its frailties and passions; carnal, fleshly", and it's used this way every time you see this word in the Bible, except when it's talking about the flesh of animals, and that's very easy to see as you read.

Now let me ask, did unfallen Adam have a carnal nature or any frailties? No! He was perfect and in the likeness of God in character. But on the human side the Scripture says Jesus did have fallen flesh, and those that teach otherwise are deceivers and antichrist. That thought alone should give us reason to pause and think seriously about what we believe about this, and it should also give us good reason to consider that maybe we shouldn't be sitting in a church who's leaders are promoting this kind of fake news. If you attend a Sunday church or a Seventh-day Adventist

church, I challenge you to ask your pastor if Jesus had a fallen or unfallen human nature, and if you get the wrong answer I would suggest that that be the last time you attend, otherwise you will knowingly be sitting in the pew listening to a deceiver and an antichrist, and you'll end up perishing in your sins.

Let's look at one more bit of fake news and then we'll quit. The correct understanding of the state of the dead is important for some of the reasons I already mentioned, but let's look at it in a little more detail, and we're going to have to move fast, so you might want to just jot down the references.

We already read **Genesis 2:7**, but let me read it to you again, "And the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living being."

Consider the equation like this, BODY + BREATH = A LIVING SOUL. Or in death we might write LIVING PERSON - BREATH EQUALS A CORPSE. That's exactly what Solomon says in **Ecclesiastes 12:7**. When one dies he says, "Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit (or "breath", and by the way, when you read the word "spirit" and "breath" in the Bible, unless it's talking about the Holy Spirit, almost every time it's the very same word in the Hebrew. The Bible translators just decided which one they were going to use in different places, but "spirit" and "breath" are the same thing.) "Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it." This is essentially the same thing David said in **Psalm 146:3, 4**, "Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man (or in any human being), in whom there is no help. His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish."

And so King David introduces something different here? Doesn't he? He says that when the breath leaves the body and returns to the earth, the conscious part of man, or his thoughts, perish. That's why the Bible warns about trying to contact the dead in **Isaiah 8:19, 20**, because you're really not contacting the dead. The dead are dead and their thought processes are no longer functioning. In the Old Testament they called it communicating with familiar spirits; familiar because they look and sound like someone you were familiar with when they were alive. And what happened to people who tried to do that? They were stoned, they were put to death. And so there was a reason why God said don't try to contact the dead. **Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6** tells us the dead know nothing. So if that's true, then who is it that's going to appear to us? A demon impersonating our dead loved one, and that demon is not going to tell you the things God would want you to do and believe.

In **Psalm 115:17**, David says, "The dead do not praise the Lord, nor any who go down into silence." **Job 14:10**, "Man dies and is laid away; indeed he breathes his last and where is he?" **Vs. 12** "So man lies down and does not rise, till the heavens are no more."

Now when are the heavens going to be no more? **2 Peter 3:10** says "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise." So Job

understood that he was going to stay in the grave until the heavens are no more, and that would be at the second coming of Christ. **Job 14:12** continues, “They will not awake nor be roused from their sleep. Oh, that You would hide me in the grave, that You would conceal me until Your wrath is past.” And when will the wrath of God be past? In **Revelation 15:1** and **16:1** it says the wrath of God are the seven last plagues, and the seven last plagues are poured out just before Jesus returns. And so, again, Job understood that he was going to stay in the grave until the 7 last plagues were past and Jesus returned. As **Job 14:14** continues on it says, “If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait, till my change comes.” The word “change” is an important word and we’re going to see that in a minute. So remember that word.

One of the most comforting truths in God’s word is that when a person dies he or she rests quietly and undisturbed by the problems of life until the call of the Life Giver. That’s why the Bible likens death to a sleep. Fifty-eight times the Bible refers to death as a sleep, and there’s a reason why “sleep” is used to represent death. When you go to sleep at night and you sleep soundly you don’t have any recollection of the passing of time, you don’t know anything that’s going on around you until you wake up the next morning. And isn’t that a beautiful thought when you think about the death of your loved ones? They know nothing until the resurrection morning. And so the Bible uses the word “sleep” to represent death over and over again. And even Jesus used the word “sleep” to represent death. He used that word to describe the death of one of dearest friends.

There was a home in Bethany that Jesus visited often, the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. One day when Jesus and His disciples were by the Jordan they received an urgent message that Lazarus had become very sick, and Jesus purposely stayed away for two more days. In **John 11:11** He said to His disciples, “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that may wake him up.” Then His disciples said, “Lord, if he sleeps he will get well.” However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking a rest in sleep. Then Jesus said to them plainly, ‘Lazarus is dead.’

And so they went on their way to Bethany where the family lived and as they approached the city Martha came running out to meet them weeping. And in **John 11:21** Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.” Then in **Verse 23** Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Now notice very carefully these next words in **verse 24**, “Martha said to Him, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” Now Jesus, like I said, often visited the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus and I am absolutely certain that they had some spiritual conversations. And I’m sure that they must have talked about what happens to people when they die. And Martha knew exactly what happens. That's why she said, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” Martha expected Lazarus to be resurrected at the end of the world and Jesus didn't correct her theology.

However, Jesus was about to give a sneak preview of that last day event by raising Lazarus before that time. So Jesus asked that the stone that sealed the tomb be rolled away, and in **John 11:39** Martha said, “Lord, by this time he stinks, for he has been dead four days.” Nevertheless the

stone was rolled away and Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" And as Lazarus struggled to walk because of those grave clothes, Jesus said, "Loose him, and let him go."

What a day that must have been for Mary, Martha and all those friends that were there sorrowing over his death. But you know friends, that was only a small preview of the glory and the excitement that will happen when Jesus comes again and all the graves of those who have accepted Him as their Saviour are opened and they rise to meet the Lord in the air.

In **1 Thessalonians 4:13** Paul says, "I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope." And in **Verse 16** he says, "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an arch-angel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first."

Then in **1 Corinthians 15** Paul describes this event in detail when Jesus comes. In **1 Corinthians 15:51** he says, "Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—" Remember that word I told you to remember? Remember what Job said? He said, "I'm going to wait in the grave until my change comes." And here we see that we're going to be changed when Jesus comes and raises the righteous dead as it says in **Verse 52**, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we (**the living righteous**) shall be changed. That's when this corruptible puts on incorruption, and this mortal puts on immortality."

Two more verses and then we'll call it quits. In **John 14:1-3**. 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?**) receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."

Now, if a righteous person goes to heaven when they die, Christ has already received them, hasn't He? And they would already be where Jesus is. But no, that's not what the Bible teaches. Jesus went away to prepare a place for us and He's coming back, and THEN He will receive us, and THEN we will be where He is, and not before. Really it seems so plain as you read the Bible. When people die they sleep in the grave and rest from their labors and troubles until Jesus comes.

In **James 2:26** he gives an interesting analogy. He says, "For as the body without the spirit (**or without the breath**) is dead (**and if you look up the word "dead" in the concordance, it says corpse**), so faith without works is dead also." In other words, just as genuine faith does not exist when works are absent, so life is non-existent when there is no breath in the body. Never forget it. The idea that there is life apart from the body, or that the soul is immortal, is a development that originated in the Garden of Eden as Satan lied to Eve and said, "Ye shall not surely die."

That's why it's very important that we understand why the resurrection of the body is so

important. It always takes the physical body and the breath of God to make a living soul. It's really no more complicated than that. God wants us to understand so that we won't be fooled by the various manifestations of spiritualism that Satan will use, and is even now using in these last days. The movies on television and at the theaters and on the Internet are full of spiritualism, and even the children's cartoons.

Friends, I share these things with you because the devil is preparing the world for his masterpiece of deception through spiritualism and in his personation of Christ, and unless we know what the Bible teaches about these things, we don't stand a chance, because we are no match for the devil.

If we are not rooted and grounded in the truth and make it a daily practice to abide in Christ, we will be fooled into thinking that black is white and white is black. We've got to be filled with the Holy Spirit if we're going to rightly divide the word of truth and be prepared for what's soon to break upon the world as an overwhelming surprise. And my prayer for you and for myself is that we will not be surprised by anything the devil can throw at us, because we have done our due diligence and fortified our minds with the word of truth. That's the only way we're going to make it.