

A Destroying Doctrine, Part 2

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Spirit life: a destroying doctrine. This is the second part. Let us read again from Hebrews 2:14-15, where Paul writes to the Israel people: "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."

At least part of that fear comes because we do not understand what death is. Paul writes that the fear of death makes men subject to bondage. Life is precious. Life is the only thing we know by experience, and if we believe we are going to lose it, we naturally become fearful. I believe there is more in this phrase than many people have considered. Paul says that because of this fear, men are subject to bondage.

Some of you know that we live in a great and terrible time as a nation. We are fearful. Some people tell us that our enemies, those who would like to destroy our nation and our people, may someday threaten us with atomic war. They may threaten to send missiles here, to conquer us, or to destroy us unless we surrender. Why would we surrender, except that we fear death? In other words, a large number of our people might choose bondage under an alien, Antichrist, communist enemy rather than risk death.

I believe this is part of what is wrong with our civilization. We fear death so much that we accept many things we would never accept if we did not have that fear. Paul says here, and we will explore it further, that Jesus Christ went to the cross and died for us to break this bondage, this captivity, this fear of death. I think the fear of death would rest less heavily upon our people if they truly understood the Bible truth about it. Many men preach about death, but what does the Bible say?

Turn with me back to Job again. We were reading there last week. I said I would call three witnesses from the Old Testament concerning what actually takes place at the death of God's people. I will read a few of these passages again to refresh our memories.

In Job 3, after Job had, in effect, asked to die because of his sorrow, the loss of his children, and his affliction, he writes about death. In verse 13 he says, "For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest." Then in verses 17-18 he says, "There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor." According to Job, death, or the place of death, was a quiet place.

In Job 7:21, speaking to God, Job says, "And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? for now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be." Job said that if he died, he would not be. He would not exist in conscious activity.

In Job 14:12-13, he says, "So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!"

I should read a little from my own tract to explain this word translated "grave" here. Job wanted to be hidden in the grave, and the Hebrew word is Sheol. The English word hell appears thirty-one times in the Old Testament, and every time it comes from the Hebrew word Sheol. But Sheol is also translated grave thirty-one times and pit three times. To understand what the Bible hell is, we must understand what is meant by the Hebrew word Sheol.

The King James translators, more than four hundred years ago, evidently felt that both hell and grave carried the meaning of Sheol. This becomes clear when we realize from old English sources that the Anglo-Saxon word *hel*, or *hell*, meant to cover or to hide out of sight. When farmers put potatoes or other root crops in underground cellars to prevent winter freezing, they called it *helling* them. Putting a roof on a new house was also called *helling* it. Therefore, it was entirely natural for the translators to use either *hell* or *grave* for the word *Sheol*, since both words carried the sense of being covered or hidden. *Hell*, in that Old Testament sense, is simply the grave.

That is denied by practically all ministers in America today. Yet this word *Sheol* is the source of the word *hell*, and here it is translated *grave*. Job wanted to be in *Sheol* for a set time, but he looked forward to resurrection. In Job 14:14-15 he says, "If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands."

Job elaborates on this in Job 19:25-27: "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." In other words, though Job believed he would be in *Sheol* for a set time until his Redeemer called, he knew he would be called out of *Sheol* by the voice of God Almighty.

Let us go on in Job. We have a few more passages in this book before we call another witness. David and Solomon will also be called to testify concerning the state of the dead.

Job 21:22-26 says, "Shall any teach God knowledge? seeing he judgeth those that are high. One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow. And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure. They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them." All have the same end in the grave.

In Job 21:29-30, he says, "Have ye not asked them that go by the way? and do ye not know their tokens, That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath." Here Job is apparently speaking of someone being brought out of the grave to wrath. He is speaking of the wicked, who would be in *Sheol* just as others would be. But he says they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.

Let us turn to the New Testament and see what Jesus Christ said about the resurrection day in John 5. Beginning in verse 24, Jesus says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." That verse is often read alone as part of the supposed proof that when we die we do not actually die, but pass directly into everlasting life. But that is only part of the passage.

Jesus continues in John 5:25-27: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." He is talking about resurrection.

Then in John 5:28-29, He says, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

The word *damnation* in that verse was an unfortunate word to use, but I believe this is all in God's providence, and we must search these things for their true meaning. If you look up the word *damnation* here in Strong's Concordance, you will find that it comes from the same Greek word

translated judgment most of the rest of the time. It means they will come forth to judgment. Judgment does not necessarily mean destruction or eternal punishment. In the Greek, it has the sense of a tribunal or a hearing. They would be called forth to a hearing.

There is more than the resurrection of the already justified. We claim that in Christ we are justified. We will not have to stand before God for a hearing in order to determine our justification. We will be judged righteous through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. But others will be called forth out of the grave to judgment, to a tribunal, to a hearing, and then something will happen to them, not necessarily what the fundamentalists say. We will get into that later. For now, notice that Jesus was talking about the same thing Job was talking about: a resurrection of the dead. Some are resurrected to life, and some are resurrected to judgment.

Back in Job 21, Job says that "the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction" and that "they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath." He continues in verses 31-32: "Who shall declare his way to his face? and who shall repay him what he hath done? Yet shall he be brought to the grave, and shall remain in the tomb." The whole passage says they would be brought to the grave and would remain in the tomb, just as Job said he would. He was going to Sheol for a set time.

So far, there is no room in Job's theology for the no-death teaching of paganism. Billy Graham, as some of you know, teaches that saved Christians do not die but go immediately to heaven. I have an answer by him here in which he admits that this is not taught in the Old Testament.

The question put to him was this: "Can you help me? I am confused by reading recently that after each death we are just in a sort of suspense or repose till the resurrection. I had always been taught that at the moment of death we went to be with God."

Here is Billy Graham's answer, as printed: "The subject of death is getting more attention today. Many colleges and universities have courses in this subject. Too long we have winked at its presence and ignored its significance. The Bible has a great deal to say about it, and one of its main messages is that faith in Christ has finally broken the tragic hold that death has had on all mankind. If you were to judge merely by Old Testament statements, you might think there was a sort of suspended animation after death. St. Paul, however, gives a later definition." Then he quotes from the New Testament.

In other words, if you were to believe only the Old Testament, you would think people slept in the grave until the resurrection. So Billy Graham does admit that the Old Testament Scriptures teach sleep in the grave. He ends the article by saying that Paul would not have said, "to die is gain," unless he meant that what is gained is the presence of the Father, more than counterbalancing the loss. He says death does not terminate the existence of the Christian, but gives it more freedom and a wider range.

That is what is taught by practically all of the so-called fundamentalist and Pentecostal teachers today. I know that some say, "Pastor Emry, this is not important. We cannot do anything about the dead. Whatever is going to happen to them is going to happen." I have had discussions with people who do not believe that the dead die, but believe they go right on living. When we get into the Bible and begin to find out what the Bible really teaches, that is almost always the argument presented: "There is no point in this discussion. God will take care of it. Whatever happens will happen."

But I believe you should know God's truth about this. Turn with me to Job 23. Remember that all the way through Job, we are finding that this man is a righteous believer in God. In his pain, his sorrow, and the punishment God allowed him to suffer at the hand of the devil, he never once turned against the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He asked God for release. He wanted to die, but he admitted God was keeping him alive.

Job 23:10-12 says, "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food."

Do we dare say that God's Word, or any doctrine in it, is not important? Should we refuse to search it out? If we do not like what we are finding, should we ignore it and quit studying the subject? Righteous Job said he esteemed God's words more highly than his necessary food.

Job 27:8-11 says, "For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul? Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him? Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God? I will teach you by the hand of God: that which is with the Almighty will I not conceal."

I have a letter from a minister. In fact, he put it on tape and sent it to me. In it he rebuked me sharply and at some length, for fifteen or twenty minutes, for teaching about the state of the dead. He said it had nothing to do with the gospel of the kingdom, nothing to do with the Israel identity, and that it should not be made a controversy among our Israel people.

Yet Job tells us so much of God's truth about the state of the dead. Righteous Job, who was justified by what he said at the end of the book and placed back in God's favor, said that he would teach by the hand of God, and that which is with the Almighty he would not conceal. I think any minister who takes upon himself the privilege and responsibility of preaching God's Word should not conceal that which the Scriptures reveal. It is time we decided to teach everything God reveals to us as His truth.

I am convinced in my own mind that one of the major reasons for the fear of the American people before the enemy is that they do not know what death is. That is why we fear it. Some fear they are going to hell. Many fear they are not going to heaven. They all fear the grave. Yet God has told us that the grave is a place of rest, of sleep, of quiet. The dead know not anything. What would happen to us? Nothing. The very next moment of consciousness after death would be the resurrection, though it be a hundred years or a thousand. To me, that is a great comfort. I do not know whether it is to other people or not.

Turn to Job 30. Here Job is speaking to God. In verses 22-23 he says, "Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my substance. For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living." Yes, we are mortal. We live now by the hand of God and by His power. But God has appointed unto man once to die. This mortal must put on immortality, and death is the way to that immortality. Why, then, do we fight it? Why do we fear it?

That ends Job's witness to his faith and theology. If you read all the book of Job, and I have skipped a few things but read most of the relevant passages, you will find that Job teaches sincerely that if he were to die, and when he did die, he would go to Sheol. That is the word translated hell throughout the Old Testament, and in many cases here translated grave. There he would wait until the resurrection. Job did not fear it.

I believe that if we reach any portion or percentage of the faith Job had, we also will not fear death if we understand what it is. Now I am going to call David as my next witness. But before I do that, turn back to Acts in the New Testament, because I want to read what Peter said about David.

We read this last time, and some of you may feel this is repetitive, but human beings learn by repetition. Acts 2 is a chapter in the Bible that serves as the basis, or at least verses in it serve as the basis, for one of the largest and fastest growing denominations in the United States of America, called Pentecostal. They read Acts 2 and say, "This is the basis for our faith."

Now I am going to read something in Acts 2, and I have read this to Pentecostal people. Many of them, most of them, have been startled to find that this is in the chapter. They did not seem to know it.

In Acts 2:29, Peter says, "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day." Then in verse 34 he says, "For David is not ascended into the heavens." That is strange theology to most denominations in America today. Peter, one of the great disciples of Christ, who preached the sermon at Pentecost, said that David is dead, David is buried, and David is not in the heavens.

Now let me read to you what a modern preacher says about death. The title of the booklet is *The First Five Minutes After Death* by William W. Orr. If I recall correctly, he has a nationwide daily radio broadcast on several hundred stations. Many of you have heard him. I am not picking on Mr. Orr, but I am reading this because it is very similar to what is taught by most radio preachers.

On page 19 he spends the first few pages on the story of the rich man and Lazarus, as you would perhaps surmise. Most men use that as part of the foundation of their teaching. Here he is speaking of the death of Christ, and then he follows it with this statement: "We know exactly what happened to the body of Christ. He was taken down from the cross, wrapped in new linen cloths with a hundred pound of spices, according to the Jews' manner of burial. Joseph provided a tomb for the burial. A huge stone was rolled at the door to prevent molestation and the Roman seal affixed. Later a military guard was thrown around the tomb to forestall any attempt on the part of friends to remove the body. But apart from his body, what happened to the Lord himself?"

He continues: "Evidently, he immediately entered into the abode of Hades or Sheol where the righteous dead resided before the advent of the resurrection. Psalm 16:10 makes this truth clear by the prophetic statement that the Holy One of Israel was not to be left in Sheol." Psalm 16:10 says, "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." That is the verse quoted by Peter in Acts 2.

Mr. Orr goes on to say, "To be sure, Christ was to go there, but he was not to remain in that place. A corresponding passage suggests that there was to be an evacuation of the inhabitants of the section occupied by the righteous. They were taken far above and into the home of God himself. Ephesians 4:8-10."

Turn with me to Ephesians 4, because one of the major causes of our Christian people believing false doctrine is that ministers often give a Scripture reference, interpret it, but do not print the Scripture in the tract. Nine people out of ten, or perhaps ninety-nine out of a hundred, will not look up the reference and read it for themselves. So I am going to read it, and you read it with me.

He refers to Ephesians 4:8-10 as his proof that the righteous dead in Sheol were taken to heaven: "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)" Then verse 11 says, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." Those are the gifts mentioned in verse 8.

Of course, his main verse here is verse 8: "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." Mr. Orr, and perhaps one hundred thousand, two hundred thousand, or three hundred thousand other ministers with organized churches, preach to many thousands of people every week and teach, among other things, that when Jesus died on the cross He went to Sheol, took the righteous dead out of Sheol, and took them with Him when He ascended into the heavens.

Turn with me to Mark 16. There are three eyewitness accounts of Jesus going into the heavens. Let us read all three of them. Mark 16:19 says, "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." That is all Mark says about it.

The next witness is Luke. In Luke 24:50-51 we read, "And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." Matthew and John have no account in their Gospels of the ascension. Only Mark and Luke do.

The third account is in Acts 1. Most of you know it quite well, but let us read it also. Acts tells of Jesus preaching for forty days to the disciples about the kingdom of God. Then in Acts 1:9-11 we read, "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

Here are the only three eyewitness accounts of the ascension of Jesus, and there is not one phrase or one word indicating that anyone went with Jesus into heaven. They speak of Him going, and that is all. Yet Mr. Orr and thousands of others write that Jesus went into the earth, into Sheol, and from there took the righteous dead into heaven.

Turn with me to 2 Timothy. Paul is writing to Timothy and warning him of false doctrines. In 2 Timothy 2:15-18 he says, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some."

In other words, shun profane and vain babblings. They will increase unto ungodliness. They will eat as a canker. What will do that? The next verse says it plainly: men who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and who overthrow the faith of some.

Mr. Orr and these other ministers who preach that those in the grave at the time of Christ were resurrected and taken to heaven are actually preaching that the first resurrection is already past. Paul says that preaching the resurrection as already past will increase unto ungodliness. I believe that the teaching that all of the past dead are now in heaven is one of the major causes of ungodliness on the earth today.

I will tell you why. I have talked to many individuals of many ages, including young people, who decided when they were young that there was no way they could ever be good enough to go to heaven when they died. So they went out and became sinners and let it go. They said, in effect, "I am going to hell, so I might as well go." Why did they do that? Because they were not taught the truth that when they die, they sleep in the grave until the day of resurrection, and that through the blood of Christ they can stand before God cleansed of all sin and unrighteousness. They were not taught that they would not go somewhere and suffer years and years in torture, but that they would go to the grave and Christ would call them from the grave.

This simple gospel of the resurrection is not taught in America today. I read last week from William Tyndale, who wrote to a Roman priest many years ago: "Ye, in putting departed souls in heaven, hell, and purgatory, destroy the arguments wherewith Christ and Paul prove the resurrection."

Someone took a survey among American people a few years ago, and they discovered that, generally, more than sixty percent of the people interviewed did not believe in the resurrection of

the dead. I said earlier that our fear of death, because we do not understand resurrection, may someday cause our people to submit to an alien communist enemy rather than die.

When I read in my history books about the attempts by the Roman Empire under the Caesars to conquer our forefathers in Britain, Julius Caesar himself wrote that his major trouble, and the reason he was not able to go beyond a few miles inland from the British coast, was because the British people believed in resurrection and life after death. They fought and would not give up.

I think that when we consider this further, we will find that this basic error in doctrine, as taught in our churches today, is one reason America has become a nation of cowards. We fear death because we do not understand it. These men teach something almost impossible to believe. I believe millions of people who have heard ministers talk about Christ going to Sheol, taking the righteous up to heaven, and leaving the unrighteous there to suffer in pain and torture forever, have turned away and rejected the church and the Bible, and have not even remained in churches.

I hear from people all the time who tell me they were driven away from the church because of the hellfire doctrine they heard when they were children. False doctrine drives our people into what Paul warned Timothy about. It drives them into ungodliness. I believe false doctrines about death are driving our people into that.

So you may ask, "What does Ephesians 4:8 mean, then?" Let us come back to it and examine it a little, because this verse is used as the foundation stone for the teaching that the Old Testament saints are now in heaven. Remember, even Billy Graham admits that the Old Testament does not teach that people went to heaven when they died. He admits it teaches that they went to Sheol. Mr. Orr also admits this in his article.

Ephesians 4:8 says of Christ, "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." They interpret the phrase "he led captivity captive" to mean that He took the captives in hell and led them into heaven. But turn with me to Daniel 5. Most of you know that anything in the New Testament that is hard to understand can be understood by verifying it or investigating it in the Old Testament.

Daniel 5:13 says, "Then was Daniel brought in before the king. And the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry?" In other words, the king asked Daniel whether he was of the captivity.

Turn also to Amos 1:6: "Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they carried away captive the whole captivity, to deliver them up to Edom." Then in Amos 1:9 we read, "Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Tyrus, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and remembered not the brotherly covenant."

If you look up the word captivity, you will find that in the Old Testament, in these places and others, Israel is called the captivity about fifteen times. It is a title for the children of Israel. Remember, in Hebrews we read that we are, through fear of death, all our lifetime subject to bondage. It is literally true that God's Israel people are captive under the power of Satan here on the earth.

What did Jesus do when He went into heaven? What did Jesus do when He died on the cross, was resurrected from the dead, and ascended into heaven, except to break the captivity of the captivity? He broke the power of the devil over us. He broke the power of death, which put us in bondage to Edom and all these other enemies of Christ. That is what He did. The text does not say He took anyone with Him. We read the three testimonies in the Gospels and the book of Acts. There is not one word or one line saying Jesus took anyone to heaven with Him.

What did He do when He led captivity captive? He broke the power of the captivity of the Israel people. That is the whole message of the Messiah. What did Christ come to do? He came to redeem us. What does the word redemption mean? It means to buy back from captivity.

I know it sounds almost too simple to read those verses and say, "All it means is that Jesus broke the captivity of the Israel people." But that is literally what it means. Yet men preaching this terrible doctrine of life in torment after death have taken this one verse and said, "Jesus went down into the inner parts of the earth." They even have songs about how He went into hell among screaming, terrorized people.

If you have heard those sermons, you know they often say the righteous were in the quiet part of Hades while the unrighteous were in the flames and fire. Then they use Ephesians 4:8, "He led captivity captive," as their proof.

Let us turn to David for his testimony. In Psalm 6:4-5 David writes, "Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake. For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?"

William W. Orr, writing of death in his booklet *The First Five Minutes After Death*, says this about those first five minutes: "The rich man still possesses a number of human characteristics. He sees, feels, speaks, hears, suffers, beseeches, argues, recognizes, hopes, and reasons. In fact, he does not appear to lose in the transit the use of any of his senses. He recognizes the justice and the permanence of his sentence. He does not argue about the reason for his being there. He is in full possession of his memory."

David said, "For in death there is no remembrance of thee." Let me also read from the end of the Psalms. Next week, God willing, we will read some passages in between. Psalm 146:3-4 says, "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."

William W. Orr says, in effect, that the rich man and all the wicked go to hell where they can think, hope, reason, speak, hear, suffer, and remain in full possession of their memory. Not only is that nonsense, but it is one of the most dangerous pieces of nonsense taught to our Israel people in Christianity today. I believe the doctrine of hell and heaven as taught by the so-called fundamentalists today is responsible, in large part, for the corruption and turning away of our people from God's Word. Next week, God willing, we will go on to prove that a little further.