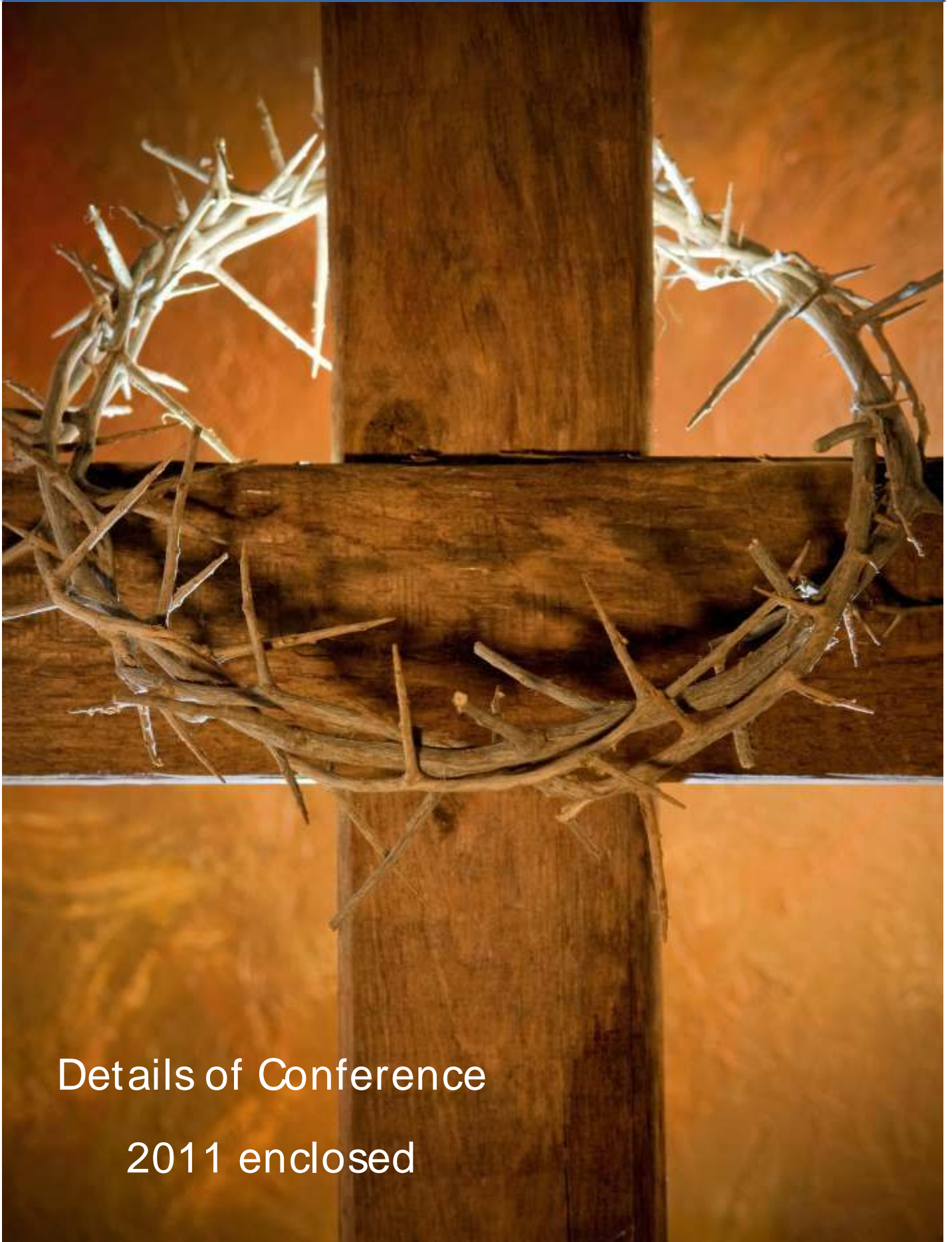


issue 48  
MAR  
2011

from death to **life** jn5.24



Details of Conference

2011 enclosed

life · death · resurrection · eternal destinies · bible teaching



# Conference 2011

## Saturday 14th May 10:45am to 3pm

Speaker: Matt Flannagan

Topic: Annihilation and Apologetics



Dr Matthew Flannagan is a theologian with proficiency in contemporary philosophy. He holds a PhD in Theology from the University of Otago, a Masters (with First Class Honours) and a Bachelors in Philosophy from the University of Waikato; he also holds a post-graduate diploma in secondary teaching from Bethlehem Tertiary Institute. He is currently assisting with preaching at Takanini Church. He is able to communicate at a variety of levels and his presentation at the Conference will be suitable for lay people.

### Programme

- 10:45 Tea / Coffee
- 11:00 Business meeting
- 12:30 Lunch
- 01:30 Tea / Coffee followed by Speaker
- 03:00 pm FINISH

### Location

Quality Hotel BarryCourt  
Parnell Auckland  
10-20 Gladstone Rd , Parnell

## Response Form: Subscription, Membership and Conference

Fill in the form and send it back to us at the address below

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tick One

- Full membership (including postal magazine) .....\$15.00                      \$\_\_.00
- Full membership (newsletter by email notification) .....\$15.00                      \$\_\_.00
- Newsletter by email notification .....FREE
- Postal Newsletter only .....\$15.00                      \$\_\_.00

### Conference

Please reserve \_\_\_ seats for  Full Conference (Speaker and lunch 10:45-3pm).....\$\_\_.00

Cost: \$35 waged, \$25 unwaged

Tick One

Tea / Coffee and Speaker (1:15-3pm).....\$\_\_.00

Cost : \$6 per person

**Donation** .....\$\_\_.00

**TOTAL** .....\$\_\_.00

Post to : Resurrection Publishing, Po Box 202162, Takanini, Auckland 2246

Cheques payable to Conditional Immortality Association

## In This Issue:

- 1 **Editorial: If you died today...**  
Rev. Jefferson Vann
- 4 **"Away from the body" 1 Corinthians 5:8**  
Rev. Jefferson Vann
- 8 **What about the soul?**  
Robert F. Gardiner
- 9 **Moses on the souls of animals**  
Rev. Jefferson Vann
- 12 **Resurrection Revealed — Final**  
Beryl Ching
- 17 **Hell Under Fire: Final Part**  
Warren Prestidge

## Production

From Death to Life is a quarterly publication produced by:  
**Resurrection Publishing** for The **Conditional Immortality Association of New Zealand**.

Editors: Jeff Vann, & Tarnya Burge

Design & Layout: Tarnya Burge & Garry Schäche

Print & Distribution: Tarnya Burge

## Subscription

Print subscriptions may be sent in the amount of NZ\$15 for four issues to:

**Resurrection Publishing**

**PO Box 202-162**

**Southgate**

**Takanini 2246**

**New Zealand**



# If you died today...

## Editorial—Jefferson Vann

The billboard on the interstate highway asked “If you died today, where would you spend eternity?”

The question was never asked in the Bible. It reflects a theology based on some assumptions that are not held by biblical authors. I would be uncomfortable asking the question to anyone, for fear that they might assume that I hold the theology.



First, asking *where would you spend eternity* assumes that everybody is going to be alive to spend eternity somewhere. The Bible does not teach that. The Bible teaches that God’s gift of eternal life is available only to those who put their trust in Christ. Eternity is not a given.

John 3:36 “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life”

John 6:40 “For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

John 6:47 “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.”

John 10:28 “I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.”

1 John 5:11-12 “And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

Jude 1:21 “keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.”

Second, asking *if you died today* indicates that it is the time of one’s death that seals their fate. A more biblical question would be *Who is your LORD today?* A person’s fate is not based on the time of her death but the quality and commitments of her life.

Matthew 10:25 "It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master."

Matthew 10:42 "And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward."

Luke 14:26-27 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple."

Luke 14:33 "So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple."

Acts 9:10 "Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord.""

Nevertheless, the question is an honest one. My brothers and sisters in Christ who put up that sign may be somewhat confused about their theology, but their heart is in the right place. The question on the billboard reflects an urgency. It implies that thousands will drive that road every day who have never seriously considered their eternal fate. It is correct.

Perhaps you are one of those people who have never taken seriously the

claims of Jesus Christ. Maybe you have thought about what would happen to you if you should die today.



Probably nothing. You would probably be buried, and rot in the grave for a very long time. But one day the same Jesus who was raised from the dead the first Easter Sunday will come back and raise you from the dead too.

Then you will really face the moment of truth. It will not be the day of your death, but the day of your resurrection which you should be concerned about.

Matthew 13:47-50 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. So it will be at the close of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the

righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

The evil ones who trust in their own ways will suffer, be discarded and destroyed. The righteous who put their faith in Christ will be gathered and saved for eternity. If you were to die tonight, which resurrection would you be a part of? Would you have a chance to spend eternity in God’s new heaven and new earth?

Commit your life to Jesus Christ today. Then you will not have to worry about whether you die today or tomorrow. You can be safe in him.



***Jefferson Vann and his wife Penny have been missionaries with Advent***

***Christian General Conference since 1996. They have served 13 years as professors at Oro Bible College in the Philippines. ■***

**PROJECT** 2011/2012

# GEN. 12:1

Go forth from your country  
and from your relatives  
and from your father's house  
to Thailand, which I will show you

[www.acmissionz.org.nz](http://www.acmissionz.org.nz) **SHORT TERM MISSION**



# “Away from the body”

## 1 Corinthians 5:8

By Jefferson Vann

2 Corinthians 5:1-10 ESV

*1 For we know that if the tent, which is our earthly home, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, 3 if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. 4 For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened--not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5 He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. 6 So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 9 So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.*

This is one of those passages that

has been so hijacked by traditionalist thought that the wording appears to reject much of what the same author (Paul) says elsewhere. Before addressing 5:8 itself, it is helpful to review the theology of 5:1-10, to see that it is consistent.



### **What Paul believed about the Resurrection**

This passage looks forward to the resurrection body. If the earthly body is a tent, that resurrection body is a building fashioned by God himself (v1). This earthly body can be destroyed. The resurrection body is permanent (aionios). It is a house not made with hands. But

the glorious eternal body is not a present possession. It is an inheritance. This future immortal life is guaranteed (v5), and the Holy Spirit is the guarantee.



Paul is not saying that he has mortality (the tent) and immortality (the eternal house) at the same time. The reason he groans (v2) is that he only has this present mortal body, which suffers persecution and hardship, shipwrecks, floggings, etc. He is longing to put on that heavenly dwelling. Here Paul mixes the building metaphor with that of putting on clothing. Paul had used that metaphor in his previous letter to Corinthians, where he was addressing the same subject: the

resurrection.

*For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory"*

*(1 Corinthians 15:53-54 ESV).*

The translators have added the word "body" to the text, but it would be just as appropriate to supply the word "me" instead. It would then read "For this perishable me must put on the imperishable, and this mortal me must put on immortality. When the perishable me puts on the imperishable, and the mortal me puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." Paul is talking about the future when Christ comes to give him the immortality he promised. He is longing for that time, not the intermediate state. He is looking forward to life, not death. In this present life he expects to continue to groan, being burdened (v4).

With this promise of the resurrection in mind, he considers his present state in the (mortal) body. He does not feel at home. He feels away from the Lord. He would rather be away from his mortal body, and at home with the Lord (8), but that is not his choice. As



long as Christ tarries, he makes it his aim to please the Lord (v9). He knows what is done in this life matters because Christ is going to judge and reward when he comes (v10).

In summary, in 1 Cor. 5:1-10 Paul argues that the resurrection is essential because believers do not yet have the eternal, immortal existence that God promised them.

### **What Paul believed about the Second Coming.**

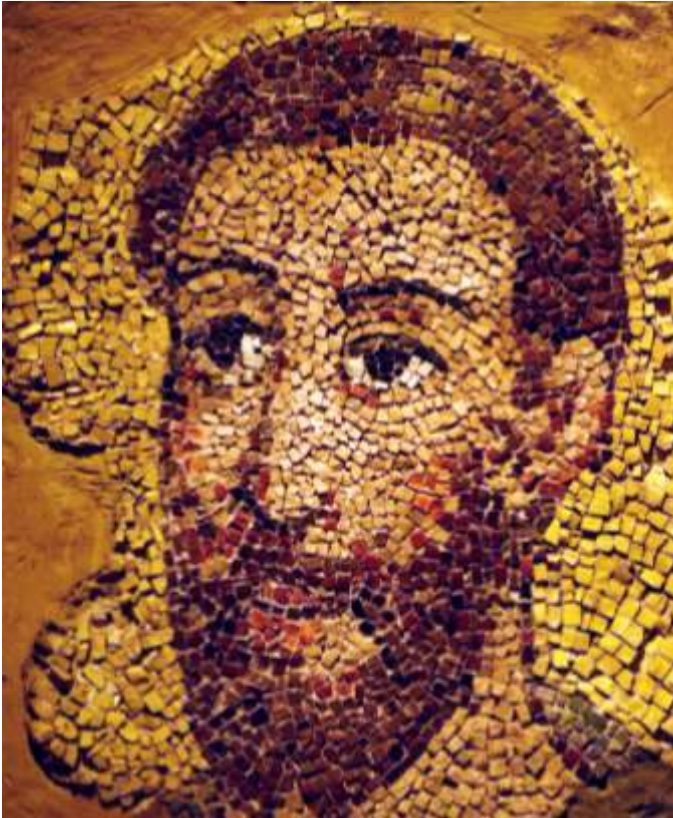
The second coming of Christ is the event Paul has in view. The building from God is in the heavens. The only way Paul is going to experience it is for Christ to come down to earth and bring it with him. When Jesus ascended, angelic messengers told the disciples that Jesus would come back in the same way that they saw him ascend: literally, physically (Acts 1:10-11). They did not promise that the disciples would see Jesus before that event. Paul, likewise, expected the second coming to be the next time he would see Jesus. Paul said "For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together

with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16-17). That was his hope.

It was at the second coming that Paul expected to get his new house, his heavenly dwelling (v2). He talked about "what is mortal" being "swallowed up by life" (v4). He had previously told the Corinthians that this transformation would happen



"in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15:52). The heavenly dwelling that Paul expected was not a disembodied existence, but a resurrected life. This could not happen at death. It required the second coming of Christ.



Paul is walking by faith, not by sight (7). He is not relying on what some Greek philosopher has told him about human nature. He is trusting in Jesus, that he will keep his promise. By faith, he lets the Holy Spirit inside him operate. That Holy Spirit is the guarantee of what is to come (v5), not what Paul already possesses. If Paul got what he wanted, he would be "at home with the Lord" (v8). But if Christ does not come in his lifetime, he is willing to remain "at home in the body" until he does.

**What Paul believed about the intermediate state.**

Paul repeats one idea in this passage in order to stress it. He is adamant about this one thing, so

he does not want the Corinthians to misunderstand him. For that reason he says he does not want to be "found naked" in vs. 3, and repeats that he does not want to be "unclothed" in vs. 4. Both statements mean the same thing. Being clothed means getting his resurrection body. Thus, there is only one thing that being unclothed could mean: the intermediate state. Paul is not looking forward to the state between death and the resurrection. That is not his hope. That is not the event that he refers to when he wants to encourage other believers (1 Thess. 4:18). That is not what he is longing for (2). That is not the time when what is mortal is going to be swallowed up by life (4). That is not what the Holy Spirit guarantees (5). A disembodied existence is not what Paul means by "being home with the Lord" (7). For Paul, home is the building from God (1). Being "with the Lord" is not going to happen until the second coming (1 Thess. 4:17).

Paul does affirm a judgment after death, but it is the "judgment seat of Christ" (v10). Christ does not judge anyone during the intermediate state. He will raise the

dead and then judge them. He will judge the living and the dead at the same time (Acts 10:42). This will happen only after Christ returns (Rev. 20:12-13). Humanity is right to expect a judgment of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God (Heb. 10:27). But that judgment will not occur during the intermediate state. Paul taught that the judgment is an event yet to come (Acts 24:25). It is not going on now.

Paul treats the intermediate state as both existentially and theologically insignificant. He skips over it, concentrating instead on the more important issue of the resurrection. The Bible teaches that the intermediate state is one of darkness (Job. 7:9; 10:20; 17:13; 18:18; Psalm 13:3; 49:19; 88:12; 143:3; Prov. 20:20; Eccl. 6:3-5; Lam. 3:6), and silence (Eccl. 9:5,6,10; Job 21:13; Psalm 6:5; 30:9; 31:17; 94:17; Isaiah 38:18-19). It is no surprise, then, that Paul would not look forward to it.

What Paul does look forward to is the second coming, when Paul will be both away from his (present suffering, mortal) body and at home with the (returned, triumphant, sovereign) Lord. That is the hope he describes in 1 Cor. 5:8. That is our hope. ■

Republished from the

**Bible Standard 1880**

## What is the soul?

By Robert F. Gardiner

What is the soul? This is a question which has been asked in all ages; but the answers which they often gave or got have in many cases failed to convey the correct idea, if not an altogether erroneous one. Before proceeding to answer the question for ourselves, we will glance at one or two answers which have been already made to this question.

Hodge defines the soul as being "unextended and indivisible."<sup>1</sup> Now it follows that a thing which is without extension, must necessarily be without substance, and hence must be immaterial. The same argument has been adopted by Drew, who defines the soul as being "a single unextended indivisible atom."<sup>2</sup> The question before us thus resolves itself, do humans have souls? To this we answer humans are souls. Since humans are souls, the soul must be a real existence capable

[Continued on page 15](#)



# Moses on the souls of animals

By Jefferson Vann

Long before Plato ever said anything about the human soul, the Old Testament writers presented a consistent biblical anthropology. Augustine was biased toward platonic philosophy, even going so far as to claim that Plato brought him to God.<sup>1</sup> But there is no reason for us today to be biased



toward Plato's (or anyone else's) philosophy. We should first seek to understand what God himself has revealed about humanity before inquiring of any human speculation.

The Hebrew word Moses used that our English bibles sometimes translate *soul* is *nephesh*, a word that suggests something that breathes. In fact, the Ugaritic and Akadian cognates also mean "throat."<sup>2</sup> Moses' use was consistent with an understanding that a soul is a living breathing being.

Consistent with this understanding, Moses had no problem using the term *nephesh* to refer to animals. In the creation account, Moses records "And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens."<sup>3</sup> The ESV uses the phrase "living creatures" to translate the Hebrew *nephesh chayah* (souls of life). It is obvious from the context that Moses refers to fish and sea mammals, and birds, not people. This first use of *nephesh* highlights a contrast with Plato's teaching that only human beings have souls.

Moses continues to use the term to refer to animals in the next

few verses. He says “So God created the great sea creatures and every *living creature* that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird ac-



ording to its kind.”<sup>4</sup> Likewise, in verse 24, “And God said, “Let the earth bring forth *living creatures* according to their kinds- livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so.”<sup>5</sup> And later he says, “And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that

has the *breath of life*, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so.”<sup>6</sup> The phrase “breath of life” translates *nephesh chayah* again. So all four references to the soul in Genesis 1 refer to animals, not people.

Later in the account of Adam’s dominion in the garden of Eden, Moses again speaks of animals with souls when he describes Adam’s responsibility to name them: “So out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every *living creature*, that was its name.”<sup>7</sup>

When Moses recorded God’s covenant with Noah after the flood, he included the provision which allows for eating animals. The covenant stipulated that “you shall not eat flesh with its *life*, that is, its blood.”<sup>8</sup> The word the ESV translates as *life* is the same term, *nephesh*. He probably meant that the blood of the animal is essential to its life – that is – if you take away its blood it will stop

breathing. The rule forbade eating an animal while it was still alive – while it still had its soul. The account continues to use the term *nephesh* in reference to animals.<sup>9</sup>

It is poor theology to simply suggest that the same term means living being when referring to animals, but implies an immortal being when referring to people. It does not do justice to the fact that the term is used of both animals and people, nor to the fact that their meaning is consistent as long as the interpreter is not already biased with a presupposition that humans were created immortal.

What we learn from Moses is that humans were created -- like the animals -- as living, breathing beings, and that when they lose their breath, they die, and return to the dust from which they came.<sup>10</sup> Without the promise of resurrection, that would be the end of human existence.

Greek philosophy came along and subverted that simple theology by taking God and the resurrection out of the picture. Instead Plato and others exalted the nature of humanity. That magnified anthropology bolstered the concept of the dignity of man, at the expense of Moses' teach-

ing on human dependence upon God.

The gospel message does not require that humans be deified. It tells us that believers have the hope of eternal life – not because we were born different from the animals – but because Jesus has made a way for us to be resurrected to immortality. It is the cross of Jesus Christ – not our created human nature – that gives us hope of life beyond the grave. It is the second coming of Jesus Christ – not our own death – that is the biblical blessed hope. ■

### **References:**

<sup>1</sup> B. F. Cocker, *Christianity and Greek Philosophy* (New York: Carlton & Lanahan, 1870), 10.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 1935a *Nephesh*.

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 1:20.

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 1:21.

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 1:24.

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 1:30.

<sup>7</sup> Genesis 2:19.

<sup>8</sup> Genesis 9:4.

<sup>9</sup> Genesis 9:10, 12, 15, 16.

<sup>10</sup> Genesis 3:19



# Resurrection Revealed

## Final Part—Beryl Ching

### RESURRECTION IN THE APOCALYPSE

#### *General Resurrection*

In proclaiming Himself to John the Apostle in the vision on Patmos, one of the things the Lord said about



Himself was, “[I] have the keys of hell and of death” (Rev. 1:18). He was thus informing John, and the churches, of His power to release those who had died, from the bonds of death.

In each of the letters to the seven churches in Revelation chapters two and three, promises are made to overcomers which can only become true through the resurrection of those addressed, as all of them are now dead. In addition, to the church of Smyrna He says, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (2:10). What is this, but a promise that if they die as martyrs for the faith, there will be a resurrection?

In Revelation 11:18 we find the words, “The time of the dead, that they should be judged (is come)”. The verse goes on to say that God’s servants, prophets, and saints, will be rewarded, and that those who destroy the earth will be destroyed. Obviously this judgement cannot take place unless there is a resurrection first.

The final picture of the resurrection is in Revelation chapter 20. Commenting on verse

5 Dr. Schofield writes: "Although it is shown in both the O.T. and N.T. that the resurrection of the just to life eternal, and the resurrection of the lost to everlasting condemnation, are distinct from one another...here for the first time the precise interval between the two resurrections is revealed as a period of 1000 years." Those who take part in the first resurrection are blessed, because the second death will have no power over them (v. 6). In v. 13 details of the resurrection to judgement are given - the dead are raised even from the sea, and death and hell (margin: the grave) deliver up the dead.

In the next chapter, and almost at the end of the Biblical record, we read that beautiful verse, Rev. 21:4. The resurrection having taken place, "there shall be no more death".

### ***Resurrection of Christ***

In Revelation 1 a glorious vision of the resurrected and glorified Christ is opened to our eyes. As He speaks to John, He declares, "I am he that liveth and was dead" (v. 18). He repeats this affirmation in His letter to Smyrna, "These things saith the first and the last, which was dead and is alive" (2:8).

In the vision seen in Revelation chapter 4 a Lamb appears. It was "a Lamb as it had been slain", but it was now very much alive. The Lamb, of course, represents the Lord Jesus Christ, who had died and been resurrected. The Lamb appears a number of times in the book of Revelation, though the emphasis is usually on His death rather than His restoration to life; nevertheless His eternal glory is clearly depicted, as in 17:14.

### **CONCLUSION**

Because the emphasis of this thesis has been on resurrection, we have not taken up the many verses speaking of eternal life. Yet it is obvious there can be no eternal life for the masses born into this world who have already died, unless there is a resurrection. And this we have abundantly verified from both Old and New Testament Scriptures.

We have seen the prophecies of both the general resurrection and of Christ's resurrection in the Old Testament, and the confirmation and

fulfillment of these prophecies in the New Testament.

Why is the resurrection such a vital truth? Because on it hinges many important Christian doctrines. Christ's return, the gift of immortality to believers, the final judgement, the new heavens and the new earth are all dependent on the resurrection of the dead.

Regarding the resurrection of Christ, George Lindley Young (1866-1944) says,

*"The fact of Christ's resurrection sustained his claims, confirmed his atoning work, and determined him to be the Son of God in truth...It was our Lord's resurrection that made possible this ascent to the Father; made possible the forwarding of his mediatorial work; even makes possible the completion of his redemptive work at his final return, his raising of the dead and the bestowment on them of immortal glory. Indeed the future and endless life of our Lord's followers is somehow bound up with the great fact of his triumph over death..."*<sup>76</sup>

To conclude, I quote Tanya Ferdinandusz (ellipsis is the author's):  
*"Think of a loved one who has died.*

*Picture her or him standing taller, stronger, and more beautiful than you remember, unmistakably and gloriously alive, smiling...and walking towards you. That's our resurrection hope! Believe, and praise God!"*<sup>77</sup>

#### **References:**

<sup>76</sup> quoted in "Resurrection: His and Ours" by David A. Dean, Advent Christian General Conference of America, Inc., 1977

<sup>77</sup>Tanya Ferdinandusz, *Daily Bread*, January-March 2005, p. 67. Scripture Union International.



**Beryl Ching, spent over 40 years on the mission field in India. Returning to New Zealand to "retire", Beryl was for a long time secretary of the Conditional Immortality Association. 'Resurrection as Revealed in the Old Testament and Confirmed in the New testament' is the full title of her Thesis presented to the Faculty of the Freelandia Institute Biblical Theological College in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree Master of Biblical Studies.**



## What is the soul ?

Continued from page 8

of extension and division, and also composed of, not one atom, but of all the atoms which go to make up the body.

But let us turn to the Bible, and see what it says. In the first place Hodge and Drew, along with the majority of writers on this subject, says the soul is a part of the human. The Bible says the soul is the human. *Gen.2: 7* states. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became (not got) a living soul." This is clear evidence; but let us proceed.

We are taught that the Soul is immaterial, and as an immaterial existence can have none of the appetites which belong to the body. The Bible, on the contrary, teaches that the soul partakes of the same nature as the body, inasmuch as it is liable to the same passions and appetites. We read of "hungry souls,"<sup>3</sup>; "thirsty souls,"<sup>4</sup>; "full souls,"<sup>5</sup>; "afflicted souls,"<sup>6</sup>; "unstable souls,"<sup>7</sup>; "idle souls"<sup>8</sup>; "weary souls,"<sup>9</sup> where we also read of "sorrowful souls."

But, further, an immaterial soul

could not perform any actions, or have any actions performed upon it. Upon this point the Bible is most clear. It plainly teaches that the soul is capable of performing all the actions pertaining to the body, and also of having these actions performed upon it. We read that the soul can be cut off.<sup>10</sup> It is capable of offering sacrifice<sup>11</sup>; of swearing<sup>12</sup>; of committing trespasses<sup>13</sup>; of being destroyed<sup>14</sup>; of sinning<sup>15</sup>; of touching<sup>16</sup>; of dying<sup>17</sup>; of being killed<sup>18</sup>; of being grieved<sup>19</sup>; of being torn<sup>20</sup>; of being stolen<sup>21</sup>; of mourning<sup>22</sup>. It can fast<sup>23</sup>. It can eat flesh<sup>24</sup>. It is said to creep upon the earth<sup>25</sup>. One soul to be given in exchange for another<sup>26</sup>. It can be possessed by animals<sup>27</sup>. It is said to be born<sup>28</sup>. It can be bought with money, and used as an article of food<sup>29</sup>. It can be buried<sup>30</sup>.

The grave, or hell, has a soul<sup>31</sup>. The soul may be beheaded<sup>32</sup>. It may also be hunted<sup>33</sup>; snared<sup>34</sup>; strangled<sup>35</sup>; or taken in a pit<sup>36</sup>; or taken by ambush<sup>37</sup>. It can be put in prison<sup>38</sup>; and taken into captivity<sup>39</sup>. It can be healed, and as a necessary consequence must suffer from disease<sup>40</sup>. The Soul is said to be the blood, or in the blood<sup>41</sup>.

A careful perusal of these texts will be quite sufficient to show any

honest reader that the doctrines of Immateriality and Immortality are nowhere to be found in Holy Writings.<sup>42</sup>

### References:

<sup>1</sup> Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2. (New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co., 1873), 46.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Drew, *An original essay on the Immateriality & Immortality of the Human Soul, Founded Solely on Physical and Rational Principles (7th Edition)* (Baltimore: A Neal, 1810), 129.

<sup>3</sup> Psalms. 105: 9; Proverbs 27: 7.

<sup>4</sup> Proverbs 25: 5.

<sup>5</sup> Proverbs 27: 7.

<sup>6</sup> Isaiah 58: 10, Lev. 16: 29, 31, Num. 29: 7.

<sup>7</sup> 2 Pet 2:4.

<sup>8</sup> Proverbs 29: 15

<sup>9</sup> Jeremiah 31: 25.

<sup>10</sup> Gen. 17: 17; Ex. 12: 15; Num 9: 13, 15: 30, 31; Ezek, 17: 17. The word translated "cut off," is a most emphatic one, namely, *kah-rath* which means to cut off (as applied to trees), to kill, to destroy. In the Septuagint it is translated by the Greek word; *ezolothreuo*, which according to Liddell and Scott, means "to utterly destroy."

<sup>11</sup> Lev. 2:1.

<sup>12</sup> Lev. 5: 4.

<sup>13</sup> Lev. 5:15.

<sup>14</sup> Lev. 23: 80; Matt. 10:28. The word here translated "destroy," is even more emphatic. In the Hebrew it is *abad*, which primarily means to go; hence, to destroy, and passively, to be destroyed.

<sup>15</sup> Num. 15: 27; Rom 2:9.

<sup>16</sup> Lev. 12: 6; Num. 19: 20.

<sup>17</sup> Num. 23: 10; Josh 2: 13; James. 5: 20. These texts are quite sufficient to show that the popular idea of an immaterial soul is false, for it is plainly taught that the soul, in virtue of its immateriality, can never die. The Bible teaches something very much different. Which are we

to believe, the Bible or Plato?

<sup>18</sup> Num. 35:11, 15; 31: 19; Joshua 20: 3; Rev. 16: 3.

<sup>19</sup> Judges 10: 16; Mark 14: 34.

<sup>20</sup> Job 18:4.

<sup>21</sup> Deut. 24: 7.

<sup>22</sup> Job 14: 22.

<sup>23</sup> Psalm 35: 13.

<sup>24</sup> Deut, 12: 20.

<sup>25</sup> Lev. 11: 46.

<sup>26</sup> Ex. 21: 23; Deut. 19 :21; 1 Kings 20: 42.

<sup>27</sup> Gen. 1: 20, 21, 24, 30; 2: 19; 9: 10, 12, 15.

<sup>28</sup> Gen. 46: 15.

<sup>29</sup> Lev 22:2.

<sup>30</sup> Gen. 23: 8.

<sup>31</sup> Isaiah 5: 14.

<sup>32</sup> Rev. 20: 4.

<sup>33</sup> 1 Sam, 24: 11.

<sup>34</sup> 1 Sam 28: 9 ; Prov. 22: 5.

<sup>35</sup> Job 7: 15.

<sup>36</sup> Psalm 35: 7.

<sup>37</sup> Psalm. 56: 6.

<sup>38</sup> Psalm 117: 7.

<sup>39</sup> Isaiah 46: 2.

<sup>40</sup> Psalm 41: 4; 71: 10.

<sup>41</sup> Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17: 14, 15. This idea of the soul being in the blood was held by most of the ancients. Josephus, speaking of the law concerning animals, says: " He (God) entirely forbade us the use of blood for food, and esteemed it to contain the soul and spirit."-*Antiq.*, Bk, III. ch. xi, 2. Josephus, as will be seen, believed in the tripartite nature of man. In another place he says, " God took dust from the ground, and formed man, and inserted in him a spirit and a soul."-*Antiq*" Bk. 1., ed, i. 2.

<sup>42</sup> Let it be observed that in all the passages I have quoted, I have only taken those in which the radical terms for soul occur, namely, *nephesh*. in the Old Testament, and *pseuche* in the New Testament. In some cases the words are left untranslated in our version, but a careful examination of the original will show the connection in which the words occur.

# Hell Under Fire

## Final Part—Warren Prestidge

### CIANZ Annual Conference Address

*(cont from Part 2 in Iss 47)*

***A more serious weakness in the approach of contributors to Hell Under Fire*** is that they approach the Bible with this question in view: What does the Bible – the Old Testament, Jesus, Paul, the Book of Revelation – say about hell? Now, that whole approach is very restrictive. It simply excludes a heap of biblical evidence. What they should be asking is: What does the Bible – the Old Testament and the New – say *about the final fate of the lost?* Because that is the real issue and because, in fact, the idea of “hell” is only one of many ways in which the Bible talks about this subject. But if you direct attention only to passages which relate recognisably to the idea of “hell”, and particularly to the very small set of such texts which appear, at first glance, to support eternal suffering, you acquire, and create, the

impression that this is the normative biblical approach.

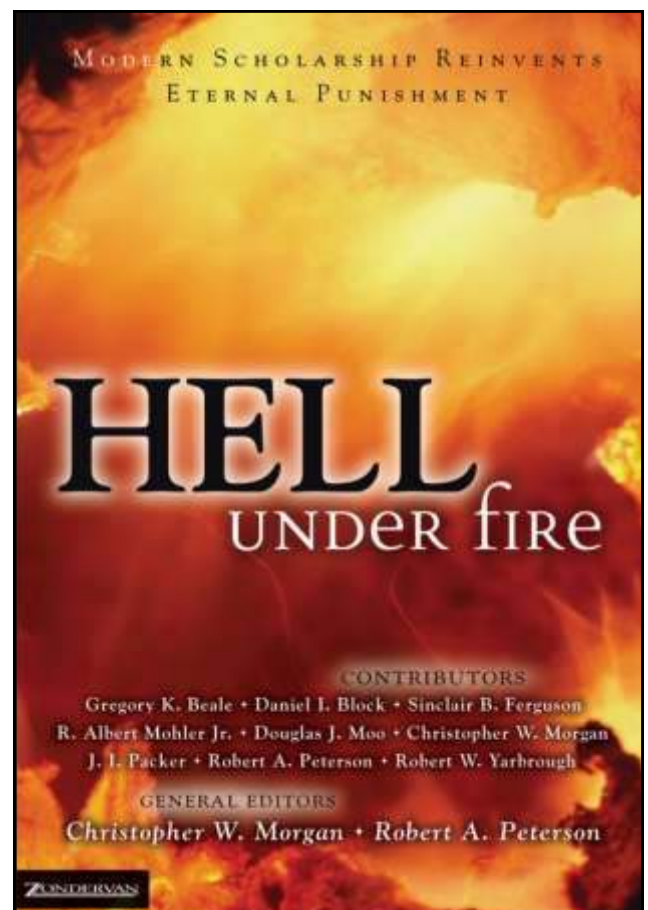
***As I say, the fundamental question is surely not, “What does the Bible teach about hell?” but “What does the Bible teach about the final fate of the lost?”*** Once we put that question, we are very likely to recall immediately that what the Bible normally says is, that they will die: “The wages of sin is death...” (Rom 6:23). Or that they will be destroyed, or perish: “God so love the world that he gave his one and only Son so that whosoever believes in him should not perish...” (John 3:16). Not that these Traditionalists are unaware of such texts, but they fail to draw attention to how common texts like these are in Scripture, and utterly fail to recognise their significance as the normative Scripture-based context within which the texts about hell ought to be interpreted. Now, it is true that these words “death” and “destruction” do



receive some attention in *Hell Under Fire*. Unfortunately, however, contributors seek to avoid the plain sense of these words by a standard Traditionalist strategy: they claim that, when referring to the fate of the lost, these words do not mean what they appear to mean: that, rather than denoting an end to conscious, functioning existence, they merely denote a change to a new, less desirable state of conscious, functioning existence. This simply will not do.

The fact is, the Bible itself regularly makes clear what it means by death. I've already referred to Genesis 3:19: "You are dust and to dust you shall return." Death is set forth in Scripture, not as another form of life, but as the *opposite* to life. "Look," says Moses in *Deuteronomy*, "I set before you life – and death. Choose life" (30:19). The penalty for sin which Jesus Christ bore for us all on the cross was death, not eternal suffering. In *Hell Under Fire*, attempts are made to counter this point by arguing that, as Christ was the infinite Son of God, the penalty He bore was correspondingly infinite and therefore equivalent to eternal torment.<sup>13</sup> Well, this is mere speculation, not Bible teaching. In fact, in *Hell Under Fire*

itself Prof. Ferguson gives a very fine biblical account of what Jesus endured at the cross (pp229-231), but finds not a single text to support this idea! What the Bible does teach is that the penalty for sin is paid by sacrifice, as indeed the whole Old Testament teaches. Now sacrifice is not an eternity of



suffering: it is life given up and life taken: it is death. And what the Bible teaches everywhere is that we saved by Christ's "blood", that is, by His sacrificial death (Rom 3:25, 5:9; Eph 1:7; Heb 9:14, 10:19; Rev 1:5). Indeed, it is

Traditionalists, not Conditionalists, who jeopardise the biblical doctrine of the atonement, and much else besides.

What about “destruction”? This term, and the related term “perish”, occur regularly in our English Bibles, to translate actually quite a few different Hebrew and Greek words for the final fate of the lost. And it is so obvious that “destruction” amounts to annihilation, that James Packer, in *Hell Under Fire*, even defines Annihilationism as “the belief that those who die apart from saving faith... will be destroyed” (p196)! Well, that’s what the Bible says!

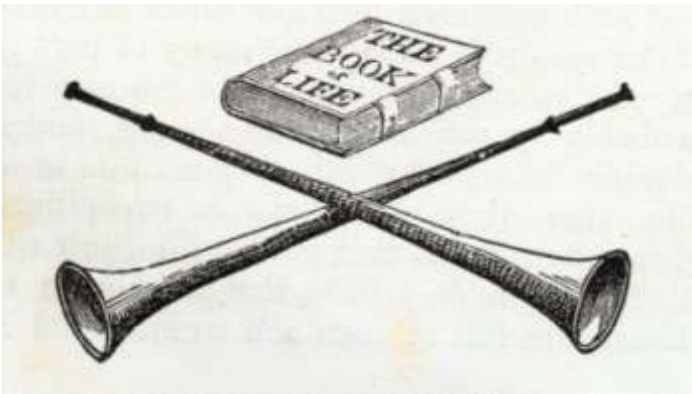
Do “destruction” and “perish” really what they say? Of course they do. This is not a matter of naive literalism on my part. The Bible itself frequently makes the import of its use of terms like “perish” and “destruction” absolutely clear in context. Sometimes this is done by means of imagery. Job 20:7: “The wicked will perish for ever like his own dung” – not pretty, but you know what is meant, and it’s not everlasting conscious existence! Psalm 37:20: “...the wicked perish...they vanish – like smoke they vanish away”! Sometimes the

meaning is clarified in other ways. Jesus once said: “Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:5). Like what? He’s referring to people upon whom a tower fell and to others who were killed by the Romans. What happened to them? They died! What does it mean, to “perish”? It means what it says! It means, to come to an end.

Sometimes the context states everything very straight forwardly. Psalm 104:35: “May sinners be destroyed from the earth: may the wicked *be no more*”. Sorry, Traditionalists: that’s “annihilation”! Isaiah 41:11: “Those who strive against God shall *be as nothing* and shall perish.” Psalm 37, which says so often that the wicked will be destroyed, also says (v10): “the wicked will be no more”.



Jesus says: “Fear God who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28). Is that really ambiguous? If the same word, “destroy”, is applied in the same sentence, without qualification, to both “soul” and “body”, will it not



mean the same thing in both cases? The Greek philosopher Plato, who believed in the immortality of the soul, said that the soul cannot be destroyed (*Phaedo* 14, 24, 36). Jesus says: Yes it can. And that is what hell is for: the *destruction* – the bringing to an end – of the whole person: as John Stott said, “an extinction of being”.<sup>14</sup>

What people associate most of all with hell, of course, is fire. Well, the fact is that in the Bible fire is regularly and unambiguously and emphatically associated with – annihilation. Malachi 4 tells us that God’s judgment day will burn like

an oven, with the result that evildoers will be completely burnt up, like chaff or straw (v1). Similarly, in Matthew’s Gospel, John the Baptist says the chaff will be burned up with fire. How is this ambiguous? Oh yes, John says the fire will be “unquenchable”. But this expression is completely intelligible against the background of Old Testament usage: for example, Jeremiah 17:27, where God says He will “kindle a fire” that shall “devour the palaces of Jerusalem and shall not be quenched”. Are the palaces of Jerusalem still burning? No, “unquenchable” means, in fact, the *opposite* of an ongoing fire: it means that the fire will not be prevented from completing its work of total destruction!

But, having read *Hell Under Fire*, I find that Traditionalists are generally unwilling to take the Old Testament background or witness into account much at all. And often when they do, the result is misleading and misinformed. For example, Robert W. Yarborough, who contributes the essay “Jesus on Hell”, claims that the last verse of the Book of Isaiah clearly teaches the notion of eternal



punishment (pp74, 82). Yarborough is referring especially to the famous phrase: “their worm shall not die and their fire shall not be quenched”. There you are, says Yarborough: eternal suffering.<sup>15</sup> And yet even in this same volume, *Hell Under Fire*, in the essay entitled “The Old Testament on Hell”, the Old Testament spokesman Daniel I. Block says no! Rather, as Block rightly points out, the image here is “that of a pile of corpses...ignominiously dumped in a heap and torched” (p61). And yet this text, of course, is clearly what is in the mind of Jesus, when he says of those cast into hell, that “their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:48). What worms feed on is the dead, not the living!

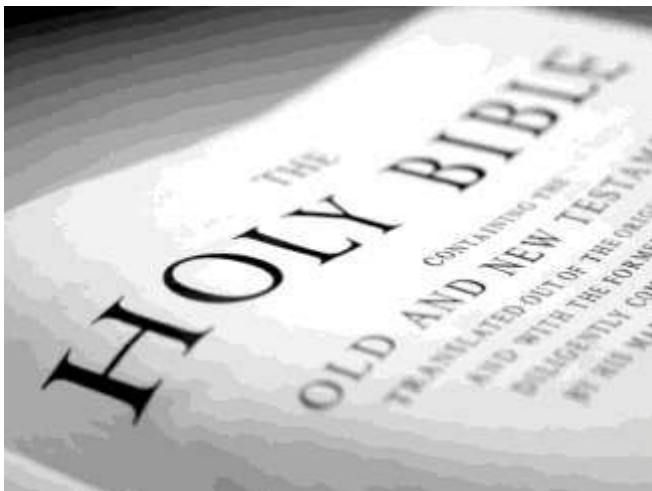
***Well, with the best will in the world, the Old Testament contributor cannot find any teaching in the whole Old Testament to support Traditionalism. And with the very best will in the world, this whole collection of militant Traditionalists can find hardly any support in the New Testament either.*** And the truly astonishing thing, they admit this! To their

credit, they’re too honest to deny it! The Old Testament man finds hardly any “hints”, even (p59), in that whole corpus! Douglas J. Moo, who contributes the essay called “Paul on Hell”, concedes: “...rarely, if ever, does Paul devote himself to explicit teaching about hell as a central purpose within his letters” (p95). Indeed, Moo hangs his whole case on II Thessalonians 1:8-9, which speaks, not of “eternal suffering” at all, but of “eternal destruction”! In fact Moo himself concedes that “the decisive data” against Annihilationism “do not occur in Paul” (pp102f) and “one looks in vain for any clear Pauline affirmations” of eternal suffering (p109).

Where, then? It is repeatedly said by Traditionalists that Jesus is the one who most clearly and consistently spoke of a hell of eternal suffering.<sup>16</sup> And yet, in his essay entitled “Jesus on Hell”, Prof. Yarborough himself can point to only two texts as unambiguous evidence: Matt 18:8-9 and Mark 9:47-48 – and we have just shown that the Mark 9 text teaches no such thing. Nor does Matthew 18:8-9. It speaks of “eternal fire”; but then so does Jude 7 and Jude 7

is speaking about the judgment that overtook Sodom and Gomorrah, not about everlasting suffering. An “eternal fire” is everlasting in its effects, not necessarily in its duration.

So then where, if anywhere at all, does Scripture clearly and unambiguously teach that lost human beings will suffer forever in hell? Surely, given that it is absolutely vital, and only fair, that we should be confronted unmistakably with this truly awesome reality, if it is true – we should find it clearly and unambiguously spelt out in God’s Word? But the answer is, nowhere. The very best that Traditionalists can do, is point us to two texts in



the Book of Revelation: Rev 14:9-12 and Rev 20:10. It is Gregory K. Beale who contributes the essay

“The Revelation on Hell”. Well, on Rev 14:9-12, even Prof. Beale concedes that the Old Testament background to this passage “could support” annihilationism and that both the grammar and the imagery in this passage “could indicate a great judgment that will be remembered forever, not one in which people will suffer forever” (pp114-116).

I’m still waiting for unambiguous testimony. Rev 18:21 sounds pretty unambiguous and that says that Babylon “shall be found no more”. Hang on: that’s annihilation! Rev 20:14 and 21:8 describe hell as “the second death”. That sounds clear enough. So what about Rev 20:10? Rev 20:10 does speak of being tormented “for ever and ever”. It is the only text in the entire Bible that does so and it refers, not to people, but to Satan, the Beast and the False Prophet. Two of those entities are symbolic and one is – well – Satan. How relevant is this text? It does not refer to people. And it’s the only text in the entire Bible that speaks of being tormented forever and ever. Over the centuries, orthodox Christian theologians have been warning us until blue in the face

not to build doctrine of any kind upon a mere handful texts.<sup>17</sup> Are we now, in the face of the consistent witness of Scripture, going to build a doctrine as astounding, controversial and frankly scandalous as eternal torment upon one text, one text of questionable significance and relevance, drawn from the most controversial book in the entire Bible?

No. The wages of sin is death. That's what the whole Bible says and – as you'd expect – it makes sense, as well! Sin doesn't make sense, but God's judgment does. However, the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom 6:23). That doesn't make sense either! That's a sheer gift. And I hope to spend all eternity thanking God for it. ■

### **References:**

<sup>13</sup> "E.g. Christopher W. Morgan, quoting David Wells, pp212-213, Sinclair B. Ferguson, p232

<sup>14</sup> D. L. Edwards and J. R. W. Stott, *Essentials*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1988, p.315.

<sup>15</sup> See also Douglas J. Moo, "Paul on Hell", p95.

<sup>16</sup> e.g. D. A. Carson, quoted with approval by Christopher W. Morgan, pp214-215; also Sinclair B. Ferguson, p239.

<sup>17</sup> "Incidentally, Robert A. Peterson concedes that the only text that could support "the

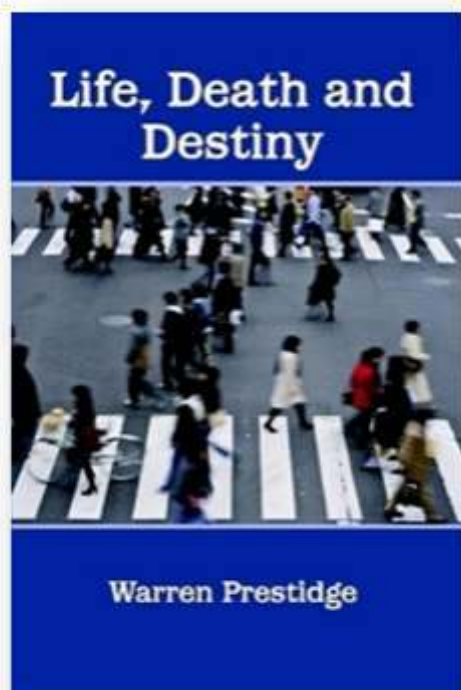
*conscious suffering of the wicked in the intermediate state" is Luke 16:19-31 And that's a parable!*



**Warren and his wife Jackie have been in church ministry since 1981. Before entering theological college**

**Warren taught English at tertiary and secondary levels. He spent 14 years at a church on Auckland's North Shore, which began as Forrest Hill Church of Christ and became Sunnynook Baptist Church! After 2 years as Director of Oro Bible College in the Philippines, he has been Pastor of Remuera Baptist Church, Auckland, since 1997. He has also lectured at Laidlaw College (formerly Bible College of NZ) in various theological and pastoral subjects, and is currently a board member of CIANZ. Jackie has taught Maths for many years. Jackie and Warren have three grown sons, all overseas at present.**





# Life, Death and Destiny

2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

By Warren Prestidge

What is the answer to death?

What is our final destiny to be?

No matter who we are we all face the same large-scale questions. This book is about two of the largest and most urgent. What is the answer to death? What is our final destiny to be? The answers offered spring from two basic convictions: that the Bible is the one truly reliable basis upon which to answer these questions, and, that the answers the Bible gives have very often been ignored, misunderstood, or misinterpreted, often with disastrous consequences.

### **New Zealand readers:**

Available for NZ \$20 + \$4.50 shipping from Resurrection Publishing

Or make a payment to Conditional Immortality Association Bank

Account by DD a/c 01 0102 0061226 00

Please identify the payment with a name

and send an email to [respublishing@slingshot.co.nz](mailto:respublishing@slingshot.co.nz)

### **International Readers**

The book is from Amazon [Life, Death and Destiny by Warren Prestidge](#)

or from [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com)

# New/ Renew Membership

( Annual Renewal is M arch)

I agree with the CIANZ  
Statement of Faith and wish  
to apply for annual  
membership.

Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Address:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email:

\_\_\_\_\_

Denomination (if any):

\_\_\_\_\_

I enclose/donate online my  
annual membership fee of  
US/NZ/Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(NZ\$15 earners or NZ\$10  
non-earners, students and  
superannuatants)

**CIANZ**

**PO Box 202-162**

**Southgate**

**Takanini 2246**

**New Zealand**

[republishing@slingshot.co.nz](mailto:republishing@slingshot.co.nz)

[www.afterlife.co.nz](http://www.afterlife.co.nz)

## Statement of Faith

1. We believe in God and His one and only Son, Jesus the Christ. Heb. 11:6; John 14:1; 3:16; 20:31; Mat. 16:16.
2. We believe in the Holy Spirit. 2Pet. 1:21; 1Cor. 6:19; Jude 20; Eph. 3:5.
3. We believe that Jesus died for us and gave himself a ransom for all. Rom. 5:8; 1Cor. 15:3; 1Tim. 2:6.
4. We believe that God raised Jesus from the dead; that by resurrection He became Lord of both the dead and the living, and the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep; and that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. Rom. 10:9; 14:9; 1Cor. 15:20; John 3:16.
5. We believe that baptism is commanded by Christ, was practiced by His Apostles, and is taught in the New Testament. Mat. 28:18,19; Acts 8:12,38.
6. We believe that all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the people of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2Tim. 3:16,17.
7. We believe that human beings are by nature mortal. Gen. 2:7; 3:19; 1Tim. 6:16; 2Tim. 1:10; Rom. 2:6-7.
8. We believe that human beings in death are unconscious. Psalms 6:5; 115:17; Ecc. 9:5,10. This is likened to "sleep". Job 14:12; Psalms 13:3; Jer. 51:39; Dan. 12:2; John 11:11-14; 1Cor. 15:51.
9. We believe that immortality is obtained only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. 1Cor. 15:21-23; 2Tim. 4:7-8; 1John 5:9-12.
10. We believe that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked, to be followed by the Judgment. Acts 24:15; John 5:25,28,29; Rev. 20:12,13.
11. We believe that evil and evil-doers shall be finally destroyed. Psalms 145:20; Mat. 10:28 Rom. 6:21; Phil. 3:19; Heb. 2:14; 1John 3:8; Rev. 22:3.
12. We believe in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Acts 1:11; John 14:3; 1Thes. 4:16.