



August 20, 2021

If a Man Dies, Shall He Live Again?

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God, from our offices here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you all doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

As we near the fall Festival season, I'm reminded that the Feast of Trumpets is soon going to be here! I always enjoy gazing up at the moon as we near God's Feasts. We'll see the next full moon this Sunday, August 22. The astronomical new moon will take place on Sep 7, at 12:52 a.m. The Feast of Trumpets will take place on September 7, beginning at sunset on September 6. This festival is so rich in meaning! It reminds us that humans (including God's saints and called out disciples) are temporary beings and even though they go to the grave and are unconscious after they die, these faithful saints will be brought back to life at the sound of the great last trumpet, the seventh trumpet. God's plan and creation point us to Him and our destiny!

This truth is contrasted with the various ideas of past cultures and present ideas of some churches regarding the afterlife. Some of the prevalent ideas still existent today are found in ancient Egyptian culture. The afterlife played an important role in Ancient Egyptian religion, and its belief system is one of the earliest known in recorded history, especially regarding the idea of an "immortal soul".

Although not a perfect reliable source, quoting from Wikipedia under 'Ancient Egyptian religion:' *"The Egyptians had elaborate beliefs about death and the afterlife. They believed that humans possessed a ka, or life-force, which left the body at the point of death. In life, the ka received its sustenance from food and drink, so it was believed that, to endure after death, the ka must continue to receive offerings of food, whose spiritual essence it could still consume. Each person also had a ba, the set of spiritual characteristics unique to each individual. Unlike the ka, the ba remained attached to the body after death. Egyptian funeral rituals were intended to release the ba from the body so that it could move freely, and to rejoin it with the ka so that it could live on as an akh. However, it was also important that the body of the deceased be preserved, as the Egyptians believed that the ba returned to its body each night to receive new life, before emerging in the morning as an akh."*

Quoting from Info Please under 'Egyptian religion:' *"When people died they were said to join with their ka. More important perhaps than the ka was the concept of the ba. The ba is perhaps*

loosely identifiable as the soul of a person. More specifically the ba was the manifestation of an individual after death, usually thought to be represented in the form of a bird. The Egyptians also believed in the concept of akh, which was the transformation of some of the noble dead into eternal objects. The noblest were often conceived of as being transformed into stars, thus joining in the changeless rhythm of the universe."

Quoting from the World Book Millennium 2000 Encyclopedia: *"Many of ancient Egypt's finest paintings and other works of art were produced for tombs and temples. Artists covered the walls of tombs with bright, imaginative scenes of daily life and pictorial guides to the afterlife. The tomb paintings were not simply decorations. They reflected the Egyptians' belief that the scenes could come to life in the next world. The tomb owners therefore had themselves pictured not only as young and attractive but also in highly pleasant settings that they wished to enjoy in the afterlife. . . The ancient Egyptians believed in a life after death, called the afterlife. They had their favorite possessions and practical objects buried with them for later use in the afterlife."*

One of the largest church bodies, the Roman Catholic Church, also has its beliefs about the afterlife. Quoting from the World Book Millennium 2000 Encyclopedia RCC Article, Paragraph 'Life after death:': *"According to Catholic doctrine, life does not end with the death of the body. Instead, the soul leaves the body and enters heaven, purgatory, or hell. On the final Judgment Day, when this world has ended, all souls will be reunited with their bodies. "Heaven is the eternal communion of those who have reached their destiny. They see God as He is and love Him and one another with complete joy. Purgatory is a temporary state for souls who die in God's love but must be purified of all unholiness. The Roman Catholic Church defines hell as the absence of God, which results in complete despair. It is the punishment people bring on themselves who have abandoned God and refused communion with Him."*

What does the Festival of Trumpets have to do with this? Contrasted with the Scriptures, we find in Genesis 2:7: *"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."*

After Adam and Eve sinned, they were told: *"In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return."* (Genesis 3:19) Mankind was made mortal, subject to aging and death. I don't see mention of an immortal soul here!

Both humans and animals die a similar death when they stop breathing, the heart stops beating, and oxygen is no longer sent through the bloodstream. *"For what happens to the sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other. Surely, they all have one breath; man has no advantage over animals, for all is vanity. All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust."* (Ecclesiastes 3:19-20)

The Scriptures tell us that the dead are not conscious. The dead don't feel pain, suffer, or communicate. *"For the living know that they will die; But the dead know nothing, . . . Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going."* (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10) *"For in death there is no remembrance of You; In the grave who will give You thanks?"* (Psalm 6:5)

The ancient man of faith Job knew that after his death a future event would involve him being awakened from the grave and being changed from the state of unconsciousness and being dead and dust in the grave to having newness of life.

Over the years, I have often read the following scripture at graveside services, before the deceased is placed into the ground.

Job 14:13-15 (KJV) V 13 O that thou wouldst hide me in the grave, that thou wouldst keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me! V 14 If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. V 15 Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.

So now to the Feast of Trumpets. Job knew that God would call or summon him from the grave. This is not implying that Job was going to be conscious in the grave until God's bringing him and many others from the grave at the sound of the trumpet blast. But once he was resurrected by God's intervention, he knew he would have a changed body and at that juncture would live again. God's Word must be our foundation. Truth comes from His Word. We'll examine more Scriptures next time that are misused in an attempt to teach the concept of an "immortal soul".

Arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.

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