

After Death - What?

Most people believe that when a person dies the soul continues to exist. This is not a new concept. The idea that man remains in a conscious state after death has been assumed from antiquity. The Babylonians began with the concept that the conscious dead are gathered into some kind of cave or subterranean chamber (Hebrew and Babylonian Traditions, by Morris Jastrow, Jr., 196-197). Jastrow believes the Hebrews had the same concept, but fails to recognize that they did not start out with this idea. Jewish beliefs that are not consonant with the Bible came from contact with heathen religions. The Apostle Paul tells us that mankind first knew the Truth of God but rejected it for futile speculations (Rom. 1:19-22). "Primitive logic," according to Jastrow, led to the belief that the dead are weak, languishing in a state of inactivity, unable to do much of anything for themselves. Life was regarded as the life force personified in bodily form. Upon death this life force, or spirit of life, survived in a conscious state that is now weak and inactive. This spirit of life hovers about and can be dangerous to those still living. Therefore, the living should be sympathetic for these helpless dead but should also find ways to protect themselves. According to the Babylonians the dead do not praise the gods because the gods can do nothing for them (Jastrow, 198-200, 202-203).

This belief that some form of man's life continues after death is almost universal. This is seen in Greek writings as early as 2000 BC. It is picked up in the Iliad and the Odyssey. Here we find the belief that ghostly images of those who once lived exist after death-the shades who have been consigned to the underworld, the remnants of former men who experience only a dull, cheerless existence and have little power to bless or harm the living (Ancient Beliefs in the Immortality of the Soul, by Clifford Herschel Moore, 3-4).

Early beliefs separated the spirit of life, supposedly found in the pantheon of gods, from the lower order of demons. The dead were placed halfway between the gods of the higher order and the demons of the lower. The spirit of life in man was regarded as identical in substance with the spirit of the gods. Immortality meant acceptance into the assembly of the gods. There was the hope that some, who had been assigned the ordinary fate of mortals, could escape after existing in some form of consciousness after death (Jastrow, 201-202, 217-220).

The Egyptians certainly did not believe that death ended life. Upon death, they believed man entered into a new, and higher, eternal life. The human body was regarded as being made up of both mortal and immortal components. Upon death the two separated and the six immortal parts, which correspond to the present day concept of the soul, set out to find their way to the gods. If the man had been good in this life, the parts became one and he entered into the company of the gods (The Ancient Egyptian Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul, by Alfred Wiedemann, 10). The practice of embalming was based on the Egyptian belief in reincarnation. If a man was good enough to enter into the company of the gods, he could transform himself at will into an animal, bird, plant, or even into a god. Since the soul could incarnate itself at will, it was free to choose its former body if the body was well preserved (ibid., 55-60, 66-68). The doctrine of reincarnation was widespread. Herodotus, Plato, and other Greek writers said the Egyptians were the first to teach it (A Critical Examination of the Belief in a Life After Death, by C.J. Ducasse, 216). While Christianity rejected the notion of reincarnation, it did not reject many other heathen concepts. This will become more apparent as we proceed.

The Pagan Tradition

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The Babylonians viewed the quest for immortality as essentially a useless task. To them, a man's fate had already been determined by the gods. The spirit of life is granted and removed at their pleasure. Man, therefore, should not concern himself with the future world; he should concentrate on the present one. This was a hopeless outlook, and the Babylonians were not satisfied with it (Jastrow, 211-214). The Egyptians, on the other hand, associated immortality with the name Osiris. Readers familiar with classical literature are aware that Osiris was the Egyptian name for Nimrod-the world's first rebel after the Flood (Gen. 10:8-10). Accordingly, Osiris fell prey to the devices of the wicked Typhon (Seth) and was slain. But he did not die. He passed into the world to come and reigned over the dead as the "Good Being." What is not realized by most Christians, is that the Osirian faith and doctrine were the precursors to Christianity, and when Christianity first came to Egypt, the Egyptians could recognize this old belief in many Christian themes (Wiedemann, viii-xi).

A look at the ancient Greeks reveals the following: They had two classes of deities-the gods that were on Mt. Olympus and the gods of the lower world. The Greeks had little concept of a soul, nor were they aware of such concepts as "ethical," or "moral." Worship consisted of the worship of beings-the gods on Mt. Olympus. Sin was regarded as the failure to recognize the bounds set for each individual, and there was neither the concept of inner disobedience to God's will nor the need for inner absolution (History of Greek Philosophy, by B. A. G. Fuller, 73). The religious experience consisted of associating with nature. The idea of immortality had little import in Greek thought, and Homer and other writers assigned the soul of the dead to the dark house of Hades beneath the surface of the earth. From what we have already seen, these souls were regarded as shadowy images, destitute of understanding, without intelligence, without blood and genuine life, and divested of all that makes life worth living. Homer mentions little about any future rewards, as both the good and the bad went to Hades. Up to the time of Socrates, Greek thought, as a whole, did not concern itself with the idea of immortality. But, by the time of Socrates, the Greeks were desiring some kind of relief from all the injustices and imperfections of life. Religion became the means by which this relief came. It became the agency employed to find the cure for evil while at the same time accounting for its existence. The two religions used for this purpose were the Orphism and the Eleusinian Mysteries (ibid., 27-28, 40-42, 47). These were the ones which set forth the hope of escape and peace from the sorrows and infirmities of this present life.

Orphism is important to the study of immortality because of its rituals. During these rituals, which were essentially orgiastic rites, the believer went into a trancelike state and was "taken out." That is, for a time the soul was freed from the hampering physical body, and the believer became one with the "very god." The believer could now call himself by the divine name of Bacchus. Greek dualism is apparent in this view; that is, man has a dual nature composed of body and soul, one part mortal, the other immortal. Dualism arose from the concept that man had sprung from the ashes of the Titans who had been destroyed by Zeus for their crime against Bacchus. Since in their material form these Titans contained a divine spark, man, too, has a divine spark. He is possessed with an element of divinity; he is a divine soul with a wicked mortal body. The goal of Orphism was to purify the soul from this material defilement and bring about a purity that leads to an enjoyable life. But, reincarnation was a necessity because it would take many rounds of life and death to achieve this (Moore, 7-9). The doctrine of reincarnation was chosen to explain why there was so much misery in the world. Immortality was applied to the past as well as the future, so that man would live after death to reap what he had sown in his past life. All of the evil that consequently befell him was the result of his past lives (Fuller, 46-47). To the Orphics there was no earthly cure for sin. The soul, separated and estranged from God, had been corrupted by its heritage from the Titans. What had to be expunged was this hereditary trait. This could only be accomplished over a period of time by reincarnation, and by the soul being born again and again (ibid., 62-63). By this means he could achieve "godhood and immortality." We see the same view in some of the Eastern religions of today.

Orphics believed the purification of the soul took place in Hades, its lot determined by what had taken place before death. Orphics taught that after a thousand years of either sorrow or joy, the soul was born

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again into another mortal body, possibly a human being. The cycle was from earth to Hades and back to earth again. The sojourn, either on the earth or in Hades, was the time of trial, punishment, and purification. The incorrigible were assigned endless rounds of reincarnation or endless punishment in Hades. The souls accounted worthy to leave earth and Hades could live in freedom with the gods (Moore, 9-11). By the sixth century BC, the idea of a mere consciousness was replaced by the belief that punishments or rewards were very much the result of how one had lived in this life (ibid., 27-28). It should not be difficult for the reader to see these trappings in Christianity-the doctrines of heaven, hell, and purgatory. It is also seen in the occult concept of reincarnation.

The Eleusinian Mysteries, on the other hand, took the view that life after death was taken for granted. Those initiated into their rites would receive a happy life in the hereafter, while those who did not were doomed to Hades (Moore, 12-13). The Eleusinian Mysteries presented the same hope of escape and salvation in heaven as the Muslim and Christian religions do today. The only difference was the trappings used to achieve this goal. Orphism did not catch on as the state religion of Greece, but it did have a marked influence on philosophy. Both Socrates and Plato fell back to Orphism for their concepts of the immortality of the soul. During the first centuries of the Christian church these concepts revived and flourished due to the reawakening of Neoplatonism (Fuller, 52, 59).

In the Orient there was a much greater awareness of the concept of evil than in Greece. The nature and origin of sin was the major theme of philosophical speculation. This was because there was a much closer connection between philosophy and religion. Two theories developed. These were dualism and emanation. Dualism we know from Greece. It assumed there were two equal powers in conflict which coexisted from the beginning. Emanation taught that the original existence of the highest and abstract purity had become progressively evil, degenerating into a lower and less perfect state of being (The Gnostic Heresies of the First and Second Centuries, by Henry Longueville Mansel, D.D., edited by J. B. Lightfoot, 24-25). The Indian religion regarded matter as the cause of evil, and evil, therefore, was merely an illusion. The aim of the Indian religion was to free man from the contamination of matter (Mandel, 27-29).

The Persians adopted various Pharisaical concepts as a result of their contact with the Jews after the Babylonian captivity. Many beliefs of the Pharisees had their origin in Babylon, where the Jews had absorbed Babylonian views. Being somewhat closer to the Bible truth, the Persians believed the cause of evil was spiritual in nature. Anyone familiar with Persian theology will see the resemblance between many of the doctrines of the Pharisees and popular Christianity. What is not realized is that Persian doctrines exercised a great influence upon Christianity (A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life, by William Rounseville Alger, 174). Many of the Pharisaical doctrines were not biblical. The Pharisees taught, for example, that those who observed the Law of Moses and the traditions of the elders would live again by means of transmigration. Those who refused to do so were doomed to confinement beneath the earth, where they were destined to remain forever (ibid., 162-163). Josephus points out that the Pharisees also taught that those who lived a virtuous life also descended into the nether world but had the power to revive and live again. The Pharisees believed in reincarnation and that souls were incorruptible, but only the souls of good men were removed to other bodies (Antiquities of the Jews, Book 18, Chapter 1 and Wars of the Jews, Book 2, Chapter 8). Another Rabbinical teaching was that those who are not circumcised will descend into hell, but their children could help them out by good deeds, prayers, and offerings (Alger, 169).

A look at the Hindus, Persians, Greeks, and Egyptians, shows that all had popular ideas of the underworld of the dead. It is quite certain the Jews adopted these various ideas from heathen neighbors. Alger tells us that the "ancient Jews" believed, like the Egyptians, that the spirit of the dead continued as a nerveless, shadowy being in the underworld (Alger, 167, 147). This is certainly seen in the account of King Saul and the witch of Endor (1 Sam. 28). Saul's view was heretical and it cost him his life (1 Chron. 10:13-14). The

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so-called “Samuel” which had been “brought up” was a demon masquerading as Samuel.

The Jewish Encyclopedia makes no bones about it. Under the heading “Immortality of the Soul” it states the belief that the soul continues to exist after the dissolution of the body is a matter of philosophical and theological speculation and is accordingly nowhere expressly taught in the Holy Scripture. This belief is antagonistic to the belief in YHVH, the article goes on to say, as eternal life is ascribed exclusively to God. It adds that Persian ideas were responsible for the notion that belief in the resurrection included the idea that disembodied souls have a continuous existence. The article tells us that it was principally through the philosophy of Plato that the Jews accepted the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Medieval Jewish philosophers held to the belief of the resurrection, while at the same time insisting on the “self-evident” character of belief in the immortality of the soul. Their only proof was the intellectual, moral, and spiritual nature of the soul. Moses Mendelssohn was largely responsible for Progressive and Reform Jews accepting the doctrine of the immortality of the soul rather than the resurrection.

Near the beginning of the second century AD, the “infant” church held conflicting ideas about the soul’s future state. This was due to the attempt to reconcile Jewish and Greek philosophical ideas. Platonic ideas that regarded the soul as indestructible could not be reconciled with the Jewish-Christian view that if the soul was immortal, there was no purpose in the mission, suffering, and death of Christ. Augustine was the genius who solved the problem. He adopted a modified form of Neoplatonism. He is largely responsible for determining the thinking within the church on the question of immortality, a thinking that has continued to this day (Moore, 70-72). While Augustine rejected the Platonic and Orphic notion of reincarnation, he did believe that the soul separated from the body at death and continued for a time without an ethereal body (ibid., 117, 122-123, 126). Thomas Aquinas later added his views. He often referred to Augustine when discussing immortality, stating, “the time which lies between man’s death and the final resurrection holds the souls in secret receptacles according as each one is worthy of rest or suffering.” He added, “Therefore, they will be neither in heaven nor in hell until the judgment” (Summa Theologica, by Thomas Aquinas, Treatise on the Resurrection, I, Q, LXIX, art. 1&2). Thomas taught the vast majority of men must be purified before they can enter bliss. Their souls must remain in purgatory until their sins have been burned away with fire. At the second and final judgment each soul will receive back its body. The body, which is now incorruptible will be composed of flesh and bones. Since the damned also have incorruptible bodies, they will forever suffer ever burning fire (Moore, 147-148).

What we have seen in all the above is that both Catholicism and Protestantism have absorbed Platonism in one form or another. Modern Protestants, however, display more of the influence of modern philosophic speculation. Moore points out that Christianity was debtor to both Jew and Gentile (Moore, 60).

The Modern View

A look at modern beliefs regarding the immortality of the soul, clearly reveals the legacy of pagan doctrine. Not all modern Christians are in agreement on various aspects of these beliefs. As far as the Old Testament is concerned, there are at least three views presently accepted regarding a future life. The most judicious of these, according to the critics, is that there is a separate existence of the spirit which does not experience rewards or punishments, but survives in a common silence and gloom in the underworld (Alder, 144). The reader needs merely to refer to early Greek beliefs mentioned at the beginning of this article to see the connection to the past.

In a book entitled, *The God Makers*, by Decker and Hunt, we find the fundamentalist view endorsed. This view defines death as separation from God. The spirits of the dead are either in heaven or hell, according to them. They use ancient pagan myth to argue against Mormon doctrine, chiding the Mormons for teaching that there is no death, while at the same time accepting the notion that death is merely the continuation of life, separated from God (Decker and Hunt, 63, 69, 78). In reality, their disagreement with

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the Mormon doctrine is only in the matter of where the soul goes after death. Hunt, in another work entitled, *The Cult Explosion*, says that at death the souls and spirits of unbelievers go to hell to await the final judgment when they will be cast into the lake of fire. Yet, at the same time Hunt says the Resurrection is the heart of Christianity (Hunt, 181). In this scenario Hunt says the souls and spirits of believers go to be with Christ, who will bring them with Him at the time of the Resurrection to be united with their bodies. Their bodies will be raised incorruptible (Hunt, 180). This is the commonly taught Protestant view many of us have heard for years. The reader will recall that the Jewish philosophers (rabbis), during the Medieval Period, were the ones who integrated Plato's idea of the immortal soul into the Bible truth of the Resurrection.

According to Hunt, to be "born again" means to accept Christ's death as one's very own, to give up life as one would have lived it, and in that act share Christ's resurrection which imparts a new spiritual life. Christian religions which do not go along with this mainstream doctrine should be regarded as cults, Hunt says. He adds that cults reject all or most of the distinctive "Biblical" doctrines upon which Christianity is founded (Hunt, 170, 127). Hunt would be in for the shock of his life if he realized what is the basis for the doctrines upon which "Christianity" is founded. A sizeable minority of Christians believe that a person is only begotten of the Spirit at the time of conversion but will not be "born again" until the Resurrection. This new birth will be the change from mortality to immortality. By conversion man becomes a potential son of God, and by the Resurrection becomes a member of God's own family. The majority of professing Christians have another view. They are told by their spokesmen that the delusion of man becoming a member of the family of God began with Satan's impossible and self-contradictory ambition to be equal with God. Satan lured Eve into joining this mad rebellion by promising that she too could be God. Furthermore, Jesus never offered godhead to anyone; He simply told His disciples to take up the cross and follow Him. Grasping after godhood breeds pride and arrogance; it warps one's thinking in a multitude of subtle ways (Decker and Hunt, 28, 40, 52).

Hunt tells us that Satan presented four lies to Eve. These were: (1) Satan held out the hope that godhood was possible and there was something she could do to achieve it; (2) Satan led Eve to believe there were no moral absolutes; (3) When Satan said, "Ye shall not surely die" he denied the reality of death; (4) Satan led Eve to believe that knowledge was the key to godhood (Hunt, 109-110). One fact is certain: Many of the beliefs regarding immortality are the result of misinterpreting the account in Genesis, chapter three. We will examine Genesis three later in this article. The fact is: The question of whether there is or is not life after death is seldom approached with an open mind or discussed objectively on the basis of relevant empirical or theoretical considerations. The belief regarding life after death is entirely a matter of religious dogma which has become the final authority on the subject (Ducasse, v.).

Decker and Hunt's most critical opposition to the idea that man can become a member of God's family is seen in their comments regarding Mormon author Milton R. Hunter. Hunter wrote that the mystery religions taught emphatically that men may become gods, and Hermes declared that we must not shrink from saying that a man on earth is a mortal god and that God in heaven is an immortal man (Decker and Hunt, 27). Overlooked in this opposition by Decker and Hunt is the fact that the Mystery Religions did not just teach that man could become God. They taught that man has an immortal soul which goes either to heaven or hell—a belief which has implications that seem to have utterly escaped Decker and Hunt.

Answers to Orthodox Arguments

Students of history are aware that the first Christian writings to appear on the world scene after the death of the original apostles were those of the Apostolic Fathers. Church historians admit these writings represent a change from the original revelation. Gnosticism, which had a powerful influence in the early AD period, followed the Church like a shadow, and the Church could not completely overcome it. The oldest theological systems that are popular today are those of the Christian Gnostic. Gnostic writings are a

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mixture of mythical and religious ideas that originated in Greece, Persia, and Judea. Gnosticism is the product of Hellenistic syncretism-the mingling of Oriental and Greek traditions (Gnosis: by Kurt Rudolph, translation edited by Robert McLachlan Wilson, 54).

When applied to Christianity, the Gnostic systems had one thing in common. They all viewed the Old and New Testaments as a revelation from two different Gods. The God of the Old Testament was the Demiurge, a sort of inferior god, while the ministry of Christ was of a higher level. Judaism, a lower-level religion and antagonistic to Christianity, had to be destroyed. All the Gnostic systems believed in the existence of eternal matter, which was the cause of all the evil and depravity in the world. This concept led to the notion that Christ could not have been incarnated in a flesh and blood form because matter is evil (Mandel, 44-45, 57-58). Christ was, therefore, an immaterial phantom, not a literal flesh-and-blood physical being. The writings of the Apostle Paul were seized upon to support this view as Paul, in describing the nature of man, wrote of the contrast between the flesh and the spirit. The result was that an alliance was made between the writings of the Apostle Paul and Greco-Roman thought. This association is what most of what is called Christianity depends upon today (Moore, 66). Christianity is a syncretism between the teachings of the Bible and the teachings of the pagans.

This influence is what is behind many of the popular views regarding the purpose God has for man. Decker and Hunt are a case in point. They tell us the Bible does not instruct us to become perfect; rather, it tells us to be perfect, a state the Christian can possess immediately without any future consideration. This perfection is achieved by receiving Christ as Savior and Lord, not by developing any innate potential. When God tells us to be perfect, He is not demanding that we become God, but that we have a "perfect heart" (Decker and Hunt, 53-54). A look at Matthew 5:48 indicates otherwise. It is true the word "Be" in "Be ye therefore perfect," does not mean "become" as some say. The Greek word for "Be" is *esesthe* and should be translated "be" as it is in the King James Version. But "therefore," which follows immediately, is from the Greek *oun*, and should be translated "then," "accordingly," "consequently," or "these being so." In the preceding verses Jesus instructed His disciples what God the Father is really like, and to be like God they should imitate His example. Like the Father, the Christian is to love his enemies, bless those that curse him, do good to those that hate him, and pray for those who spitefully use and persecute him. He must do more than love those who love him, or salute those who salute him. When he can do all these things, he will "then," "accordingly," "consequently," be perfect like the Father in heaven. The fact is: This attitude and conduct is beyond the capability of almost all who profess Christianity today. Those who think otherwise are deluded. Simply accepting Christ as Lord and Savior cannot achieve this purpose. So, what was the reason for Jesus' instruction? It is the goal we should all strive to attain. Christ was not demonstrating what happens when we are "born again" as some believe. This kind of behavior Jesus described can be achieved only after a lifetime of overcoming the pulls of human nature and mastering the self. This should be the goal of all who would be perfect like the Father in heaven is perfect.

Orthodox theology is decidedly hostile to the Law of God. And why not? According to the popular view, man has an immortal soul, and the law has no claim over his life. It makes little difference, therefore, whether one is disobedient or lawless. How one lives has no bearing on whether one continues to live after death; it has a bearing only on where one ultimately goes. The orthodox belief is that man has an immortal soul and is not required to obey the Law of God in order to be saved. All one must do is to accept Christ. Gnostics regarded the Law of God as an unnecessary burden, an outmoded reflection of the Demiurge-the inferior god of the Old Testament. Decker and Hunt employ the writings of Paul to support this view by saying Paul taught that a man is justified without the deeds of the law (Decker and Hunt, 136). Many do not realize that Paul did not say what Decker and Hunt assume. Paul did not say that a man is justified without the deeds of the law. He said, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith [apart from, or separately from] the deeds of the law" (Rom. 3:28). While justification comes by faith in the sacrifice of Christ, the law is not excluded. Justification simply means one's guilty past is erased, and the slate is wiped clean. Justification does not mean one is free to continue in sin-the transgression of the

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law. Transgression of the law is why justification is needed in the first place. Justification, then, comes by the acceptance of the shed blood of Jesus Christ made in payment for our sins. But, is one then free to transgress the law? Paul asks, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Rom. 3:31). If one is not required to keep the Law of God, why did Paul say, "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Rom. 2:13).

And why did the Apostle James write:

Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? . . .Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only (Jas. 2:17-22, 24).

The idea that man has an immortal soul had its origin in the myth that man sprang from the ashes of the Titans. We see this belief paraphrased over and over again in orthodox writings. For example, "the moment we open our hearts to the Lord we receive the witness of the Holy Spirit and know we have eternal life." And, as Decker and Hunt tell us, "the soul and spirit of every true Christian, upon death, goes immediately to heaven" (Decker and Hunt, 182). These views are those of Plato, Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas. Hunt attempts to explain how the witch of Endor called up Samuel's spirit. He says this was an exceptional case since the dead are either in heaven or in hell and have no contact with the living. Hunt fails to realize the witch of Endor conjured up a demon who masqueraded as Samuel (1 Chron. 10:13). William Alder at least recognizes that "souls" do not go anywhere. He points out that the translation of Enoch, which is often used to prove souls go to heaven, simply meant that Enoch died. The Scripture says God took him, and "he was not [found]" (Gen. 5:24).

A parable is a short fictitious story that illustrates a moral attitude or religious principle. The parable of Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16 is one of these, but it has been seized upon to "prove" man has a soul. What the parable really teaches is the Resurrection and the coming Judgment. Abraham's bosom is the term used to describe an intimate relationship with Abraham. Since Abraham will be in the Kingdom of God (Matt. 8:11), those in his bosom will share that reward. The verb "was carried"(v. 22) is in the aorist tense in the Greek language. This is a verb tense that shows fact without any time relationship. It would be better read as "is carried away." The orthodox view is that Lazarus was carried off to heaven, thereby affirming man has an immortal soul. But, like all saints, Lazarus will go to Abraham's bosom at the Resurrection. Hell, in verse 23 is the Greek hades and simply means the grave. The rich man is resurrected to face the final Judgment. The gulf between the rich man and Abraham is immortality (1 Cor. 15:50-53) which is given to man at the Resurrection.

Decker and Hunt take to task those who say man's inherent goodness and infinite potential for good as a "god-in-embryo" hardly fits the rampant lust, jealousy, hatred, murder, rape, disease, hunger, war, and other sorrows and crimes that blight this earth (Decker and Hunt, 261). Decker and Hunt are correct about man's nature. The Bible does not teach that man is full of inherent goodness. On the contrary, it affirms man's evil nature. It is this nature that must be overcome with the help of God's Spirit. Affirming to oneself that one is righteous by merely accepting Christ is a delusion. Psalm 82 makes plain the fate of those who are wicked. The description given in verses 2-7 can apply only to men-men who have lost their purpose in life and are on the path to destruction. These are men who have failed to understand why they were born. They do not know that they have been purposely given a nature with a mortal body that is hostile to the way of God (Rom. 8:7), a nature that must be changed by conversion (Eph. 4:24), and a mortal body that must be changed into spirit at the Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:44)-but, only after they have mastered the evil pulls of human nature. Orthodox theologians are quick to point out that pagans taught that men could

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become gods, but they utterly fail to grasp the fact that the fundamental and far more prevalent pagan teaching was the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and its attendant ideas of heaven and hell. To be consistent orthodox theologians must admit that a central teaching of Christianity today is the pagan doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Orthodoxy has rejected one teaching that is substantiated biblically, but accepted another which is not but is of pagan origin.

According to Hunt, proof that Satan is the author of the teaching that man can become God is found in Genesis three. Hunt tells us that Satan persuaded Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. In the lie to Eve he said “. . . in the day ye eat thereof . . . ye shall be as gods. . . .” A look at Genesis three does not substantiate this conclusion. Satan did not tell Eve she could become God. He said that if she ate the fruit she could become as God, knowing good and evil. There is a vast difference between being as God, and being God. Satan denied the consequence of sin and the reality of death. He told Eve, “. . . Ye shall not surely die. . . .” Have not millions of professing Christians been misled into doing the same? They have been taught to reject the Law of God, which the Bible defines as sin (1 John 3:4), and they have been led to believe they already have eternal life. They have been told they have an immortal soul and that death is separation from God, not cessation of life.

Orthodox theologians are troubled by Jesus’ statement in John 10:34-36. The text reads: “. . . Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?” (John 10:34-36). Hunt in his book, *The Cult Explosion*, gives his interpretation of this Scripture. He argues that there is only one true God, but many pretenders who are grasping at godhood. When Jesus told the Jews, “Ye are gods” he was merely telling them what Satan had told Eve, that she would not be God but rather “gods,” that is, pretenders to godhood. So, while there are many pretenders, there is only one God. This interpretation fails to recognize God’s ultimate purpose for man. Man has been given many of the same abilities as God, though limited. Jesus quoted Psalm 82. The Psalmist instructs men, who now are carrying out the responsibilities of God, to be just like God. If they fail in this responsibility -to exercise the character of God-they will perish, having never realized their ultimate potential. There is a vast difference between realizing that man has the potential to be in the family of God, as opposed to the Oriental belief that man is already God. The Bible makes it plain, as we shall see later on in this article, that man is not God, and until he masters his human nature will never be in the family of God. Man has the potential to enter that family, but this potential is tenuous. Eastern religions, as well as the occult, attempt to accomplish godhood without obedience to the will of God. They continue in a state of rebellion and disobedience against the holy and righteous Law of God. Jesus said, “. . . if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments” (Matt. 19:17).

When God gives the gift of the Holy Spirit, the recipient is begotten of God. During His ministry Jesus was the “only begotten Son” of God (John 3:16). Later, many other Christians were begotten as sons of God (1 Cor. 4:15, 1 John 3:1-2). The argument that John 3:16 proves there is only one begotten Son-Jesus Christ-fails to look beyond the gospels. Paul’s epistles amply illustrate that Christ was the first of many brethren to follow (Rom. 8:29). Orthodox theologians tell us that one is “born again” upon receiving Christ. The Christian, therefore, has experienced the “new birth”; he is now immortal and cannot sin. Jesus differentiated between the physical birth and the spiritual birth. He said, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6). When Nicodemus wanted an explanation, Christ told him, “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit” (John 3:7-8). Jesus did not use a parable, or make a play on words. He said one who is born of the spirit is invisible, like the wind, able to manifest himself at will. Jesus was not describing some “spiritual experience”; He described a literal birth, not the experience of conversion.

The important Greek word which relates to the spiritual birth is *gennao*. But some may argue that there are

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a number of other Greek words beside gennao which speak of birth. An examination of these words, however, reveals that it is gennao alone which speaks of the spiritual birth Jesus described. Jesus said one must be born of the Spirit in order to enter the Kingdom of God. Paul said flesh and blood cannot enter into that kingdom (1 Cor. 15:50). The English words "born" and "begotten" are both translated from gennao. King James translators often confused the meaning of the two, especially in John's epistles, not understanding that the spiritual birth of which Jesus spoke in John 3:5-8 refers to the Resurrection. For proof see Acts 13:33-34 and Hebrews 5:5, which refer to the resurrection of Jesus. Gennao is rendered "born" 39 times. It is rendered "begotten" 48 times, and ten times gennao is rendered in other ways. Any good reference work which covers the Greek usage of words will point out that when speaking of the Resurrection-the spiritual birth-gennao is the Greek word used. The "once saved always saved" belief is based on the failure to examine the Greek tenses as they are translated in the Authorized Version. Scriptures used to prove this idea are translated from the aorist, or present indicative tenses. The Authorized Version generally translates these in the past tense. The aorist tense describes a fact without any time relationship, while the present indicative does not necessarily indicate a completed act. See for example Matthew 27:63 where it is used to illustrate the future. A better translation here would be, "After three days I rise again."

Hunt is correct when he says the Mormon doctrine that there is presently a vast number of gods cannot be substantiated scripturally. What the Bible does show is that while God is One, there is a duality in the Godhead-God the Father and Jesus Christ. Hunt insists that elohim, the plural form of eloah, cannot mean more than one, yet overlooks Genesis 1:26 which states, ". . . Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . ." Or, Genesis 19:24, which reads, "Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven." The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, by Harris, Archer, and Waltke, Volume I, page 44, says of elohim: "But a better reason can be seen in the Scripture itself where, in the very first chapter of Gen, the necessity of a term conveying both the unity of the one God and yet allowing for plurality of persons is found (Gen 1:2, 26)." Hunt's explanation is that when elohim is used, it is referring to the Trinity. Hunt would, no doubt, be shocked if it ever dawned on him that the doctrine of the Trinity is as pagan as the doctrine of immortality of the soul or the doctrine of heaven and hell. The interested reader may wish to refer to The Two Babylons, by Alexander Hislop, pages 16-19, for confirmation.

Isaiah 43:10 has been quoted by some to prove man can never be God because the text says, ". . . before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me." The problem is that this view is an interpretation of what is being said. The Hebrew original is unclear. The margin has: Or nothing formed of God. Adam Clarke, in his commentary, states: "This is a most difficult place. Was there a time when God was not? No! Yet he says, before me. Will there be a time when God will not exist? Yet he says, after me. Are not all these words to be referred to his creation? Before me, no god created anything, nor was there any thing preexistent but myself. And after me, i.e., after my creation, such as now exists, there shall be no other class of beings formed. This mode of interpretation frees the passage from all embarrassment, and the context perfectly agrees with it."

Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 5:6-9 has been used to "prove" the soul goes to heaven immediately after death. Here is what Paul wrote: "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him." What did Paul mean by this statement? Some say that Paul affirms that at the time of death, one dies and leaves this sphere of existence and enters into the presence of the Lord. This passage, therefore, does not suggest an intermediate state of unconsciousness, but that at the moment of death believers enter into a state of close fellowship with God. Is this true?

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In 2 Corinthians 5:1 Paul calls the human body “our earthly house.” What, then, is “our house which is from heaven,” in verse two? Paul tells us in verse three that if we fail to receive our house from heaven we will be naked, that is, not clothed. Then, in verse four Paul says that being clothed means one receives immortality. Verses 6 and 7 should now be clear to understand. To be unclothed signifies the failure to receive our spiritual body, which alone is immortal (1 Cor. 15: 44, 53). As long as we are in this physical body-our earthly house-we are not present with the Lord. We do not have the spiritual body needed in order to be in God’s presence (1 John 3:2, Col. 3:3-4, Rev. 22:4, Job 19:26). But, Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:6 that we have confidence in God’s promise, and that even though we desire the spiritual body, whether we are accepted or not depends entirely on Him. The overlooked question here, however, is: When do the righteous receive salvation? The answer: At the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. 15:50-54). The argument that the tenses of the infinitives in verse eight of 2 Corinthians 5 and the parallelism between verses six and eight, indicate that being “present with the Lord” takes place the moment one dies, doesn’t prove anything. Why? Because the parallelism could just as well indicate the preference of state, not the time element. The infinitives in verse eight are in the aorist tense, which means verse eight simply states a fact without any time reference.

Another text to consider in Paul’s epistles is 1 Thessalonians 5:23. “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The Bible does not teach that man has an immortal soul. Man is a soul, subject to death. Death means the cessation of life. What man does in this physical life will determine his eternity (2 Cor. 5:10). Paul said, in the above verse, that it was his desire that the whole spirit, soul, and body of the saints be kept blameless until Christ returns. “Spirit” is from the Greek *pneuma*, which generally refers to the mind. It indicates the attitude and frame of mind of the Christian. “Soul” is from *psuche*, which refers to the physical life. “Body” is from the Greek *soma*, which refers to the literal flesh and blood man. A man is composed of mind, life, and a body. The destruction of any one of these can be catastrophic for the man. A man cannot function without a mind, nor without a body, nor without life. It was Paul’s desire that the Christian brethren be preserved in all respects until the return of Christ. If they lived the exemplary life required by God, even if they died before the return of Christ, they would receive the reward at His coming.

Texts in the book of Revelation sometimes used to “prove” that souls go to heaven are Revelation 5:3 and 6:9. The word “man” in Revelation 5:3 could just as well be translated “one.” Thus, “And no [one] in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.” Jesus clearly stated: “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven” (John 3:13). Men do not go to heaven. See, for example Acts 2:29. This is why “one” is the correct meaning of “man” in Revelation 5:3. Lange’s Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, quotes Alford on Revelation 6:9-11: “The representation here, in which they are seen under the altar is simply symbolical, carrying out the likening of them to victims slain on the altar. Even as the blood of these victims was poured under the altar, and the life was in the blood, so their souls are represented as under the symbolical altar in Heaven crying for vengeance, as blood is often said to do.” The Greek word *psuche*, used for “soul” in the New Testament, is the Greek equivalent for the Hebrew *nephesh*, which denotes animal life only. As we shall see shortly, *nephesh* carries no connotation beyond that of physical existence.

What does the Old Testament mean, then, when it speaks of “the spirits of all flesh?” (Num. 16:22). Is this spirit an immortal soul? The spirit in man is mentioned in several places in the Bible. See for example: Job 32:8, Ecclesiastes 3:21, Luke 23:46, and Acts 7:59,. It is called the candle of the Lord which searches the inward parts of the belly (Prov. 20:27). It is molded within the man himself (Zech. 12:1). It imparts not only intellect or thoughts, but the awareness of thoughts themselves (1 Cor. 2:11). It is the spirit of just men made perfect (Heb. 12:23). And it goes back to God who gave it (Eccl. 12:7). Spirit is from the Hebrew *ruach* and the Greek *pneuma*, which means primarily “breath” and “mind.” But neither “breath” nor “mind”

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completely satisfy the meaning in all these texts. We have no indication that the breath or mind goes back to God. One thing is certain, the Bible does not substantiate the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Ruach and pneuma are never translated soul in the Bible. Therefore, the “spirit in man” is not some immortal component which retains consciousness after death. What is it then? The most likely thing that can be gathered from the Scriptures is that the “spirit in man” is the means by which God preserves the record of man’s character, those things he has done in this life. It can be likened to a sort of blueprint of tape recording of man’s character which is filed away until God is ready to grant eternal life at the time of the Resurrection.

We have seen that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul does not come from the Bible. And we have seen what the Bible does not say. But, what does the Bible say about man and immortality? Does the Bible support the various notions so prevalent in pagan thought? Let us begin by examining what the Bible says about man.

What Is Man?

Man is a created being made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27). He was formed from the dust of the ground and is made up of flesh and bone (Gen. 2:7; 6:3, 1 Cor. 15:39). The Bible says man is clothed with skin and flesh (Job 10:11, 2 Cor. 5:1-4). Jesus Christ stated: “That which is born of the flesh is flesh. . .” (John 3:6). Men need to be aware of the fact that they are flesh (Isa. 49:26, Ezek. 20:48; 21:5, Zech. 2:13). The life span of man is but for a limited duration, his days like the grass and flower of the field, even as a shadow (Job 7:1; 14:1, Ps. 103:15, 1 Pet 1:24, Ps. 144:4). In his best state he is altogether regarded as vanity (Ps. 39:5). The Bible compares man to a worm (Job 25:6). Man ages, withers away, and goes the way of all flesh (Eccl. 12:5). He is destined to die (Heb. 9:27). One fact is certain: God is not man and man is not God (Num. 23:19).

Man Is Mortal

The Hebrew word enosh, which means “mortal,” is translated “men” many times in the Old Testament. The connection should be obvious. Man is mortal, subject to death, and is turned back into dust (Gen. 3:19). Man is of the earth, earthy (1 Cor. 15:47). They are reminded they are but men (Ps. 9:20). In the New Testament the word “mortal” is translated from the Greek word thneetos. In every case where it is used, it means mortal. Romans 8:11 tells us man’s body must be quickened in order to live beyond this physical life. Mortal man must put on immortality (1 Cor. 15:53-54). Mortality must be swallowed up in immortality (2 Cor. 5:4). Man does not already have it. Flesh and blood are mortal (2 Cor. 4:11). Both the Old and New Testaments attest to this.

Does Man Have an Immortal Soul?

If man is mortal, as the Bible says, does he have an immortal soul? According to orthodox Christianity he does, but what is the Bible teaching? When man was created, we read: “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” (Gen. 2:7). Notice carefully. The Bible states man is a soul; it does not say he has a soul. Adam became a soul. Men are spoken of as souls in the Bible (Gen. 46:18, Lev. 17:12, Ezek. 18:4). There is nothing in the Bible to indicate that the soul is immortal. This pagan concept was the result of dualism—the attempt to define man’s nature by dividing man into a body and a spirit. The Bible candidly states that souls die. See, for example: Matthew 16:26, Mark 8:36, Luke 9:25, 1 Kings 17:21, Psalm 22:29; 33:19; 78:50; 116:8; 119:175, Isaiah 53:12, Ezekiel 18:4, 20, James 5:20, and Revelation 16:3. Jesus warned, “. . . fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell [gehenna]. . .” (Matt. 10:28).

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When a man dies he returns to the dust. He goes back to the ground from whence he was taken. Man does not have a soul. Man is a soul, and souls need deliverance from death (Ps 22:20; 56:13; 116:8). The life of the flesh is in the blood (Lev. 17:11, Gen. 9:4, Ezek. 18:13). Souls have blood within them (Jer. 2:34). The loss of life-sustaining blood quickly brings death to the soul (Isa. 53:12).

The Hebrew word *nepesh* is translated “soul” many times in the Authorized Version. Notice what Harris, Gleason, and Waltke say on page 590, about *nepesh* in their reference work, the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*:

Here too belongs Lev. 17:11, one of the most decidedly theological and distinctively meaningful passages where the word *nepesh* is of major significance, and one which certainly defines the term as meaning life ‘for the life (*nepesh*) of the flesh (*basar*) is in the blood.’ Here it is the vitality, the passionate existence of an individual which is denoted. . . A total of 755 occurrences of the noun *nepesh* have been counted in the OT, and of these it is rendered in the Greek translation (LXX) some 600 times by *psyche*. . . . Of the 144 times it is used in the Psalms, over 100 of them have the first person suffix ‘my soul.’ Thus in its most synthetic use *nepesh* stands for the entire person. In Genesis 2:7 ‘man became a living creature’ [*nepesh*]-the substantive must not be taken in the metaphysical theological sense in which we tend to use the term ‘soul’ today. . . .

Then, commenting on the word “creature” (*nepesh*) in Genesis 1:20-21, 24, Harris, Gleason, and Waltke add: “In other words, man is here being associated with the other creatures and sharing in the passionate experience of life and is not being defined as distinct from them.” What the above demonstrates is that there is no biblical justification for teaching that the soul is distinct from man, or immortal, in spite of the fact that Harris, Gleason, and Waltke go on to suggest there are other ideas that imply man is more than a physical being. And that is what they are-ideas-without any biblical support for the immortality of the soul.

We saw on page one of this article that pagans believed that the dead were likened to ghostly images or shades that had been consigned to the underworld. What does the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* say about this concept? Harris, Gleason, and Waltke tell us on page 858 that the Hebrew word *rephaim*, translated “dead,” “deceased,” in the Authorized Version is of Ugaritic origin and refers to the dead inhabitants of the nether world. The eight places where *rephaim* is used are all found in poetic passages. They comment: “It is clear that this quasi-mythical term was used merely to satisfy the requirements of Hebrew poetic structure and in no way indicates any specific connotation to the root *repa’im* other than as a synonym for ‘the dead’ and the ‘place of the dead’. . . . Really, as the term refers to dead persons, the translation ‘dead ones’ would fit very well in all cases.”

Orthodox Christianity does not accept the Bible definition for death. Death means the cessation of life. Orthodox Christianity teaches that dead means separation from God. Is the Bible clear on what happens to a man after death? Notice the following passages:

For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks? (Ps. 6:5).

The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence (Ps. 115:17).

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 (Ps. 146:3-4)

These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead (John 11:11-14).

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Some may derisively refer to those who believe the above texts as “soul sleepers,” but when orthodox beliefs are stripped of their preconceived ideas based on pagan dualism, it becomes clear that the true Bible teaching is that death is the cessation of life, the utter loss of consciousness.

Man Must Be Changed

According to the Bible, one fact is certain: The only hope of life after death is the Resurrection of the dead. Flesh and blood cannot enter into the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 15:50). Man must be changed from flesh to spirit. The Bible does not speak well of human nature. It tells us man drinks iniquity like water, that man is vain, and that in his best state he is altogether vanity (Job 15:14-16; 11:11, Ps. 39:5). Without the help of God man cannot comprehend God’s spiritual truths (1 Cor. 2:11). Men have been left to their own devices. And the result? “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). All men in these bodies of flesh and blood are, therefore, under the death penalty (Rom. 5:12).

But Christ came to save sinners. He came to save mankind from the sure fate of eternal death. He came to give Himself a ransom for the sins of the world. He came as the sacrificial Lamb of God to pay the penalty for sin and to die in our stead. Man must have help in the task of being changed from a carnal orientation to a spiritual orientation. This help is given by means of the Holy Spirit, but God gives His Spirit to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32). Those who have the Spirit of God are the true sons of God, the overcomers, who are destined to be with Christ in His Kingdom (Rom. 8:9, 14, 1 John 5:11-12, Rev. 2:26-27). Man must be changed in his orientation as well as in his physical composition.

When Does This Change Come?

The change from flesh to spirit takes place at the Resurrection (Job 14:12-15, 1 Cor. 15:21, 35, 51-54). Man does not have an immortal soul. Man is a soul, subject to death—the cessation of life. When man dies he goes back to the dust of the earth to await the Resurrection. Jesus said, “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. . . .” (John 5:28-29). As Christ was changed in bodily form, so shall man be. “So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body” (1 Corinthians 15:42-44). In the Resurrection, the saints will be like Him. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).

What Is the Destiny of Man?

The statement Jesus made in John 10:34 has perplexed many. It reads: “Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?” This is a quote from Psalm 82:6. What did Jesus mean when He quoted this Psalm? The Jews had accused Him of making Himself God. His reply was based on the authority of their own Scriptures. The standard orthodox answer is that Psalm 82 refers to men who act as judges in God’s capacity. This is why they are referred to as Elohim (gods). But, does Psalm 82 have a deeper meaning? In light of what is stated in 1 John 3:1-2, that we are now the sons of God, and that when He appears we shall be like Him, implies something far more than men acting in God’s capacity, in Psalm 82. The Mystery Religions and the occult taught that man is god. The Bible teaches that man is only a potential god. Man has not yet realized that potential. That goal will be achieved at the Resurrection. What happens to the physical body at the Resurrection? “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this

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corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Cor. 15:51-53). Of all who ever lived in the flesh, Christ alone has immortality (1 Tim. 1:17), but there are many to follow Him into that state. They are called his “brethren” (Rom. 8:29, Col. 1:18), and are regarded as sons brought into glory (Heb. 2:10).

A look at Psalm 82 points out that these men-potential sons of God-are failing in their responsibilities. They are admonished to change. If not, they will perish as all men perish, having never achieved the purpose of their calling. The statement in verse six, “I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High” stands out in an awesome manner. The word “gods” (Elohim) is plural. The same word is used in verse eight, “Arise O God (Elohim=gods), judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.” If these potential sons of god achieve their purpose in life, they will rule over the nations. See Revelation 2:26-27; 5:10. They shall be like Him for they shall see Him as He is (1 John 3:1-3); they will reign with Christ for a thousand years (Rev. 19:15; 20:6).

The reader should be reminded of the historical record-what it demonstrates. Since the Bible teaching about the Resurrection was too fundamental to the Bible to be rejected, a compromise was reached. This was accomplished by Jewish philosophers who blended Platonism with Judaism in order to evade or neutralize the doctrine. They taught that the immortal soul was united with the body at the Resurrection. This was picked up by Augustine and refined by Thomas Aquinas. The Apostle Paul affirmed the bodily resurrection of Christ, and taught that the hope of life after death was the Resurrection of the dead. But Paul’s view did not wholly determine the main lines of Christian thought (Moore, 68).

The truth of the matter is this: Orthodox Christianity’s doctrine of the immortality of the soul did not come from the Bible. It has its roots in paganism. It should not be difficult to see why Eastern religions see little difference between what they believe and what orthodox Christianity believes.