

Doctrine of the Intermediate State

Introduction

The early Hebrews apparently had a concept of the soul but did not separate it from the body, although later Jewish writers developed the idea of the soul further. Biblical references to the soul are related to the concept of breath and establish no distinction between the ethereal soul and the corporeal body. Christian concepts of a body-soul dichotomy originated with the ancient Greeks and were introduced into Christian theology at an early date by St. Gregory of Nyssa and by St. Augustine. Soul, Encyclopaedia Britannica.com, accessed 9/30/19.

Limbo is a Roman Catholic theological term, referring to the concept of a spiritual realm where the souls of righteous people who lived before the time of Christ could dwell until Jesus Christ made it possible for them to enter Heaven. A similar concept was used to describe the spiritual state of children who died before they could receive the sacrament of baptism, which the Church regarded as a necessary condition for entering Heaven. The Roman Catholic Church has never endorsed this concept as an official doctrine. Limbo, www.newworldencyclopedia.org, accessed 9/30/19.

The Roman Church also called Limbo “the bosom of Abraham” thus changing the original meaning of Luke 16:22 to insert their doctrine into the passage.

Death

Ezek 18:4 Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die.

Ps 146:4 His spirit departs, he returns to the earth; In that very day his thoughts perish.

Ps 104:29 You hide Your face, they are dismayed; You take away their spirit, they expire And return to their dust.

Eccl 12:7 then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.

Not in Heaven

John 3:13 No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man.

Acts 2:29 Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day... 34 For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: ‘THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND

The State of the Dead

Ps 6:5 For in death there is no remembrance of you; in Sheol who will give you praise? (ESV)

Ps 115:17 The dead do not praise the LORD, Nor do any who go down into silence

Eccl 9:5 For the living know they will die; but the dead do not know anything, nor have they any longer a reward, for their memory is forgotten.

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Eccl 9:10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going.

Described as Sleep

1Kgs 2:10 Then David slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David.

Dan 12:1 Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. 2 Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.

John 11:13 Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking of literal sleep. 14 So Jesus then said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead"

Matt 27:52 The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised

1Th 4:13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

1Cor 15:50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.

NOTE: There is no need for a resurrection from the dead if a disembodied spirit is an immortal soul. Thus, the Greeks rejected the concept of the resurrection of the dead (Act 17:32).

Conclusion

The dead are unconscious until the resurrection of the body. They do not suffer pain or loneliness and are not aware of the passing of time.