

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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The Jehovah's witnesses' false testimony of man's DESTINY

By: Jerry Fite

The Jehovah's Witnesses teach that man ceases to exist at death, and if one dies in a lost state, he or she will be brought back from the grave to be annihilated in the fires of Hell. Such teaching contradicts the teaching of the Bible concerning man's destiny.

We are destined to die. But at death we do not cease to exist. In speaking of the temple of His body, Jesus said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up (John 2:19-21). Jesus said He had power to both lay down His life and take it again (John 10:18). Now, if He were unconscious or ceased to exist as the Jehovah Witnesses claim concerning death, He would not know when the third day came. How could Jesus raise up anything, if He ceased to exist at death?

Death, by definition is a “separation” not a “ceasing to exist”. The Greek word, THANATOS, is “that separation (whether natural or violent) of the soul from the body by which the life on earth is ended...” (Thayer, p. 282). When the rich man and Lazarus died (Luke 16:22), their souls departed from their bodies. They did not become unconscious,

or cease to exist. In the place of departed spirits called Hades, the rich man was conscious of his torment and “cried and said... ‘have mercy on me’” (Luke 16:24). Does that sound like he had ceased to exist? Abraham said to him, “Son, remember...” (Luke 16:25). One who has ceased to exist would have no memory. But the rich man AFTER DEATH could remember. He was separated from his body in death, but he did not cease to exist.

Looking at death as “non-existence”, as the Jehovah Witnesses claim, certain passages do not make sense. “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints” (Psalms 116:15). Is it precious in the sight of the Lord for His saints to “cease to exist”? Such is the conclusion, if “death” is what the Jehovah's Witnesses claim.

The destiny of the wicked is punishment in the fires of Hell. The Lord will “destroy both body and soul in Hell” (Matthew 10:28). Jehovah's Witnesses teach that “destruction” is “annihilation”. But, when we examine the Greek word “APPOLLUMI” translated “destroy” or “perish”, we learn that it emphasizes the loss of *well-*

being, not the loss of *being*. For example, men do not put new wine in old wine skins, “else the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins perish” (Matthew 9:17). These skins could “perish” in the sense of losing their usefulness, but they were not annihilated, or ceased to exist. So, destruction or perishing does not mean one has ceased to exist.

Another Greek word translated “destruction” is OLETHROS. It is found in 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9. The Lord will come “rendering vengeance to them that know not God and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might”. Eternal destruction is synonymous with punishment. If one ceases to exist, how does one suffer punishment? Jesus says that this punishment is as eternal for the unrighteous as life is for the righteous (Matthew 25:46). Eternal well-being will be enjoyed by the righteous, while eternal loss of well-being will be the suffering for the unrighteous. Death nor eternal destruction are an annihilation.