

AFTER DEATH

...then what?



Just what is death? Is there a resurrection? Do the dead know what the living are doing? Is suicide unforgivable? Where will you meet loved ones again? Why does God allow Christians to die? Does death ever come as punishment? What if one dies being unconverted? Is he lost forever? Here are the answers to these questions from God's inspired Word.

DEATH is the enemy of man — and we all hate it. We hate it most of all when death strikes very close loved ones, taking them away from us, out of our lives, away from our daily routines — just gone.

And most do not understand death.

Why is it that, with all our advancements in science and industry — our accumulation of knowledge, that we still do not know the answers to the biggest and most puzzling questions of all — what are we, and where are we going?

Millions believe in some kind of life after death. But no one seems able to prove such an assumption. Some believe we never die — but go on living, in one place or another, or in one form or another, for *all eternity*. Others believe we have *always lived*. They think life is a strange succession of *different* existences — each in a different form, in a different place.

But no one seems to *know* for sure!

Just How Important Is It?

When public-opinion pollsters ask Mr. and Mrs. Average Citizen their opinions about life, death, and the hereafter — they find most simply unconcerned.

They just don't like to think about it — especially happening to them.

But when death strikes — suddenly everything is changed! Suddenly, we *must* pause, in our swiftly moving lives, to face death. And we are compelled to ask, "Just

what is death?" And, for that matter, what is life?

Can anything, after all, be more singularly important than the answers to these questions?

You're here. You *live*. But why?

Unsolved Dilemma of Centuries

Serious though these questions are — urgent though they be — man has not yet answered them. Science does not know — says it *can't* know. Philosophers, theologians, anthropologists, historians, scholars of every stripe have put their minds to these fathomless mysteries for the many centuries now, and have not found the answer.

Today, modern space-age science, and a dazzling array of technological achievements have created an awesome new Dagon for the Western world. The average citizen finds himself continually amazed at all that is accomplished in the name of "science."

He faithfully trusts this false god of science to lengthen his life-span — transplant his kidneys when they fail, help him reduce or put on weight, change his very personality, and perhaps allow him to choose the sex of his progeny.

The modern world looks to its mechanical god — science — to save it from all its troubles. People look to medical science to save them from sickness — to the physical sciences to produce the continual flow of goods and services to make their lives full of physical ease and pleasure. They look to the "life" sciences to explain to them what they are, and where they're going, and the meaning of life.

But, somehow — death stops it all.

At death, science stops its mouth. A doctor, quietly sympathizing with grieved members of the family may say, in a kindly voice, "I'm sorry, there is nothing further medical science can do for him."

Today, the world exalts knowledge. It holds aloft the great institutions of "higher" learning. The leaders of mankind are the *products* of these same educational institutions — the "educated" men of the world.

But can anyone claim to be truly educated who does

not know what he is? Is “educated” the correct description for one who does not know why he is alive — or where he’s going, or what is death, and what happens at death?

These men *can* know. They *could* have understood, long ago — had they not rejected the very foundation of all knowledge, the revealed Word of God.

But God has said of them: “And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge [in their education — their institutions of higher learning], God gave them over to a *reprobate* mind . . .” (Rom. 1:28).

Death is a fearful, unknown blank to the great minds of this world. They simply do not know what it is!

But you can know — if you’re willing to know. Jesus *thanked* His Father that He had hidden “these things from the wise and prudent, and *revealed them* unto babes”! (Matt. 11:25.)

You Can Die!

If anything could be called “instinct” in the human creature — perhaps the “instinct” of self-preservation could.

We just automatically seek to preserve, to protect, to lengthen and hang on to our lives. But we cannot! How futile, how utterly helpless we feel, when we are urging a loved one to “hang on” — to fight to live — and see that life ebbing away right before our eyes.

But the average person just never gets around to thinking about *his own* death.

And I don’t mean moribundity of spirit — or fear of death. I do not mean a constant contemplation of death — but the knowledge of how truly mortal, how temporary, how fragile this physical, chemical existence really is.

Somehow, the average person feels himself almost indestructible.

He can imagine something terrible happening — to someone *else* — but it’s almost impossible to imagine it happening to himself. It’s like a fear of the unknown. Since most people do not know what life is, and what death is, and what happens at death; they simply prefer not to think about it.

But *we can die*. And we *do*. And we *shall*.
But what happens then?

What Is Your Life?

Just what *is* this physical, chemical, brief experience we call "life," anyhow?

Now that you think about it — the words like "life" and "death" are words almost no one has ever researched, or looked up in a dictionary.

If you did try to find some "scientific" definition for life — you would find only some statements to the effect of "the state of being alive," or the ability of a "living" organism to utilize organic life in a living metabolism, and other such "double-talk" which would not, in actual fact, tell you what life is.

But the Creator of all life *does* tell you what it is!

And He stresses its *source*, and its *temporary* qualities, and its *uncertainty*! Listen!

"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For *what is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a *little* time, and then vanisheth away..." (James 4:14).

Always, God Almighty stresses the uncertainty of life. He says, "For *dust* thou art, and unto *dust* shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:19).

You are a physical, temporal creature — entirely dependent upon a metabolic process of muscles, nerves, sinews, blood and bone — upon air, food and water. You are a living organism — a terribly fragile, temporary creature.

You're made of the elements of the ground. Perhaps in our modern societies of food nicely served on "man-made" plates of fine china, we don't like to think of the fact our food is literally composed of so much "dirt" — and that we are, very literally, "dirt." But we are!

Your Bible reveals the life of man is a purely chemical, physical existence — that our metabolic process is the same as that of animals! (Eccl. 3:19.) Nowhere does your Bible say man *has* an immortal soul, or that there *is* a "soul" *in* man. Rather, the Bible shows man is a soul.

That is, each soul (*nephesh*, in the Hebrew) is a *person*, and *can die*.

Read Ezekiel 18:4 and 18:20 where God says, "The soul that sinneth, *it* [the soul] shall die." (Write for our free booklet *Do You Have an Immortal Soul?*)

It is true there is a *spirit* in man (Job 32:8), but this spirit is not the man — it is not conscious apart from the man. This will be thoroughly explained in a future booklet on the subject.

"But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost [original: "expires" — implying exhalation, or expiration of *air*], and where is he?" (Job 14:10.)

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

Job spoke of being *kept* in the grave — and waiting for a change to take place — *not* of being alive during death!

The Certainty of Death

You know several people who have died. Probably, some were very close to you — and you cherish the memory of them — remembering the way they were, the things they said and did — their personality and character. Yet, they're dead.

In the modern, "chic," God-rejecting world, death is ignored by most people. It's something that "happens" once in a while to soldiers, or victims in automobile accidents, or elderly people, or cancer patients, or those you read of in the newspapers. But most people simply do not like to face death. The idea is repugnant to them.

Still, as the old saying goes, "There's nothing surer than death and taxes."

Isn't it about time you wondered about death? Isn't it about time you began to admit to yourself there is such a

thing? And isn't it about time you proved to yourself the real truth about it?

Remember again — there is no “dead” person to whom you can talk. Science can't give you the answer. Philosophers say they do not know what death is, except that it is not life. There is only one source to which you can go to get the true answer, and that source is the inspired Word of your God.

The Bible is, in a sense, the obituary of the leading men that God used throughout history. The greatest men of the Bible all *died!*

Perhaps we haven't thought about that. But it brings out a tremendous principle — and should give all of us *comfort* through life!

David was a man after God's own heart. When David prayed, God heard. The Psalms are, in many cases, actual prayers David prayed. One of those Psalms bears directly on the subject of *death!*

David Died

David was afflicted — in what exact way we don't know. But he apparently was very near death.

He cried out in Psalm 102:1-5: “Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come unto thee. Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day when I call answer me speedily. For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth. My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread. By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin.”

Finally, he cried out in verse 24: “. . . O my God, *take me not away* in the midst of my days. . . .”

David cried out to God to *lengthen* his life — to *save* him from death.

And God Almighty answered that prayer!

David didn't die a young man. He ruled Israel for forty years. David lived his full “threescore and ten” and died at the age of 70.

But the point is that David did *DIE!*

In I Chronicles 29:28, we read this of David: “And *he*

died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour: and Solomon his son reigned in his stead.”

The Apostle Peter was inspired to say: “Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is *both dead and buried*, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day . . . For David *is not ascended into the heavens*” (Acts 2:29, 34).

David lived a full life. God answered his prayer — he did have the mind of God (Acts 13:22).

But David died — and he is still dead. David is *not* in heaven. That’s what your Bible says.

But why?

Why did David die? Why hasn’t he received his reward? Will David ever be conscious again?

The Apostle Peter Died

Peter was one of the leading apostles in the New Testament Church. He was one of the original twelve disciples — handpicked by Christ.

Peter *knew* he was going to die!

He said in II Peter 1:13-15: “Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able *after my decease* to have these things always in remembrance.”

So Peter died.

Yet, he wrote the book on HOPE.

Peter *hoped* for the resurrection and the Kingdom of God. But he certainly didn’t expect to receive it then. Peter himself said that Christians would not find the praise and honor they sought until the *appearing* of Jesus Christ! He clearly stated in Acts, as we saw, that David was *not* in heaven — but dead and buried.

Yet, God allowed Peter — one of the most important men in God’s Church — to die.

The Apostle Paul Died

The Apostle Paul wrote 14 books of the Bible. He was the Apostle to the Gentiles, held a very important spiri-



Garner Ted Armstrong inspects grave markers at the Anzio, Italy military cemetery on a visit there in 1966.

Ambassador College Photo

tual office, had worked diligently and hard for many years, and appears to have been one of the most truly spiritual men who ever lived.

He was stoned, shipwrecked, put in prison. Paul was certainly tried in every conceivable way.

But he died.

He said: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my *departure* is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me *at that day*" (II Tim. 4:6-8).

The Apostle Paul isn't in "heaven." He said he won't get his reward until that day — the day Christ returns.

Christ said, in Revelation 22:12, "My reward is with me."

But Christ isn't here yet. The Apostle Paul is *still* dead and buried.

And did you notice?

The Apostles Peter and Paul viewed death rather objectively. Although it was a sobering experience, the Apostle Paul almost welcomed it! He said in Philippians 1:21: "For to me to live is Christ, and to *die is gain*."

When Stephen was martyred, he simply said, "Lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60).

Why?

Why in the face of death were these men calm? What is it that they knew about death that didn't frighten them?

People of God Allowed to Die

James and John the Baptist were murdered. God allowed it!

Elisha, who raised the dead to life, and was the greatest servant of God in his day became sick and died!

You can read it in II Kings 13:14: "Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died."

But, "Maybe Elisha lost faith," you say?

Not at all!

Notice, verse 21. "And it came to pass, as they were

burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and *touched the bones of Elisha*, HE REVIVED, and stood up on his feet."

God inspired that!

He wanted to get across a great principle.

That is, God's servants — the greatest of them — DO DIE! But God wanted to be sure no one reasoned that perhaps Elisha had lost faith. So He inspired this account to occur after Elisha's death.

Here was proof that Elisha had not lost faith; God had not forsaken him.

It merely came time for Elisha to die. He had served his purpose on this earth. Elisha became sick and God simply allowed him to die. God took him from the evil to come.

God allowed the wife of Ezekiel to die. Ezekiel was one of the most powerful servants of God on the face of the earth. He had actually seen the throne of God in vision. God revealed some of the most detailed and important prophecies ever given to man through Ezekiel.

But God allowed his wife to die. And it can be demonstrated that Ezekiel had not yet lived to be fifty — and certainly his wife had not lived her "threescore and ten."

But God allowed her to die. The account is found in Ezekiel 24:16-18.

"Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes [his wife] with a stroke: yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down. Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of men. So I spake unto the people in the morning: and at even *my wife died*; and I did in the morning as I was commanded."

The next few verses explain what her death was to signify to the people at the time. But the point is she died.

Any Life After Death?

Remember what Job was inspired to say? "O that thou wouldest hide me *in the grave*, that thou wouldest

keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man *die, shall he live again?* All the days of my appointed time will I *wait*, till my change come" (Job 14:13, 14).

Job knew about the *resurrection* of the dead. And so does anyone who knows the promises of God. Your Bible speaks in both Old and New Testaments of a resurrection of the dead — a re-creation of life!

Daniel was inspired to write: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2).

Later, Christ quoted these same words. Read John 5:21 through verse 29. Jesus said: "For as the Father *raiseth up the dead* . . . even so the Son quickeneth [makes alive] whom he will. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the *dead* shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall *live*. . . . 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; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation [judgment — margin]."

Christ spoke of more than one resurrection!

Notice the proof. Turn to Revelation, chapter 20. Now read verses 4 and 5. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them [Greek word: *psuche* — meaning same as *nephesh* in the Hebrew] that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

And the "souls" John saw in this vision were dead! Notice the proof. "But the rest of the *dead* lived not again until the thousand years were finished" (Rev. 20:5).

John saw a vision concerning the resurrection of the just. Christ promises rulership with Him to those who overcome (Rev. 2:26; 3:21), which He will give *at His return* (I Cor. 15:23; Phil. 3:20, 21).

The resurrection of the dead was the whole hope — the heart and center of the message — of the early Church. Notice how it completely dominates the sermons of Peter and Paul in early Church history. Read all of the following verses in context in your own Bible. “. . . Ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath *raised up* . . .” (Acts 2:23, 24). “This Jesus hath God *raised up*, whereof we all are witnesses . . . For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith *himself* [proving David, too, expected to wait till a change came, through a resurrection], The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, *until* I make thy foes thy footstool” (verses 32-35).

Peter continually emphasized Christ’s resurrection as proof of the future resurrection of all mankind. “And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead . . .” (Acts 3:15). “Unto you first God, having *raised up* his Son Jesus . . .” (verse 26). “. . . The Sadducees came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the *resurrection* from the dead” (Acts 4:1-2).

Notice. Peter preached the resurrection. He said nothing about the completely pagan doctrine of a supposed “immortal soul” or going to “hell” or “heaven” when one dies.

Rather, he emphasized how even David, a man after God’s own heart, was dead and buried (Acts 2:29) and showed the believers that David had not gone to heaven (Acts 2:34), but was waiting in his grave, just as the Bible says, until a resurrection of the just.

Meaning of Life

Paul was inspired to write one whole chapter on the subject of the resurrection. You need to *study* the whole 15th chapter of I Corinthians.

Notice how Paul was directed by God’s Holy Spirit to answer the “let’s suppose” and “what if?” kind of questions people would ask.

“But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with *what body* do they come?” (I Cor. 15:35.)

And true to that prediction — people ask: “Yes, but what about those ‘vaporized’ at Hiroshima and Nagasaki?” People want to know about men buried at sea, eaten by sharks. And what about those cremated?

All right — what about them?

Is it “difficult” for God because the same body no longer remains?

Ridiculous! And that’s exactly what Christ inspired Paul to write about such questions. “Thou *fool*, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it *die* So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption . . . it is sown a *natural* body; it is raised a *spiritual body*” (verses 36-44).

Just as Job said, there is a complete change at the resurrection. The resurrected being is given spirit life — not an old, disease-ridden, maimed or mangled, shot or burnt, hideously deformed or wasted human, physical body.

“We shall be changed,” said Paul (verse 52).

Hope of Dead

Can you see? Your Creator says death is death — just as you know it is — and that a resurrection from the dead is the whole hope of a Christian.

The hope of the dead is a resurrection *from* the dead! Baptism symbolizes that resurrection.

“Therefore we are buried [by being immersed completely in water — symbolizing burial] with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of *his resurrection*.” (Rom. 6:4-5).

Your God shows you that those who have truly been converted, who have utterly surrendered to Him — who have given up their carnal arguments, their resentment and hostility toward God and His Word, and who have begun to really live by God’s Word, will be in the resurrection of the just.

Paul said this was the driving ambition in his life.

“... And I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus . . . that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection . . . if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead” (Phil. 3:8-11).

But what about those who have *not* been converted? What if someone dies who never really knew the truth? What about the millions upon millions of Asians, Africans, and members of all races right down through history who never even heard the name of Christ, let alone had an opportunity to hear and study His Word? What becomes of them?

The Rest of the Dead

Christ spoke of a resurrection to life, and a resurrection to “judgment” (John 5:29). The word rendered “damnation” in the Authorized Version is more correctly translated “judgment” from the original.

Notice how the Bible interprets the Bible on this important point.

John was inspired to say, “But the rest of the dead [those not included in the resurrection to *eternal* life at Christ’s coming] lived not again *until* the thousand years were finished” (Rev. 20:5). The words following this parenthetical statement then refer back to the *first* resurrection of the dead *in* Christ.

But the rest of the dead — those millions having never heard, never having an opportunity for salvation “lived not again *until* the thousand years were finished.”

Notice verses 11 through 15: “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the *books* were opened: and *another* book was opened, *which is the book of life*: and the dead were *judged* [not sentenced, or “condemned,” but *judged*] *out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*”

Notice what the Bible *does not* say! Millions have falsely pictured this event as a great “assembly line” of

miserable humans, marching endlessly past a great “court-room” — each told in his turn, “You go to heaven,” “You go to hell.”

Isn't that the way YOU have always pictured it?

But that isn't what the Bible says!

Your Creator says the dead will finally be judged out of things written in the “books,” and that they will be judged *by their works!*

And what are those books? The original Greek word is *Biblos*. And *Biblos* is translated correctly into English as “Bible.” Surprising though it may seem, there is nothing “holy” about the word “Bible” when it is used by itself. But when the word “holy” is added to the word Bible, (which merely means *books*) then the meaning is *Holy Books*.

Of course.

That is exactly how you will be judged. God says, “I change not”! (Mal. 3:6.) Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). God will judge those people in the future just as He judges today.

And how does He judge His own people?

“For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?” (I Peter 4:17.)

Judgment is a “discerning.” Those who are members of God's true Church, members of the very body of Christ (I Cor. 12:13) are being judged *now!*

And how are they being judged?

Christ said: “. . . Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4). “Thy word is truth” (John 17:17), said Jesus Christ. The “books” or *Biblos* which are the laws by which you and I are judged are the books of your own Bible. Each Christian is judged, according to his works, based upon the Word of God.

Your God is fair. God does not judge you by one “method,” and then judge multiple millions, or even billions of other human beings by a totally different standard. Think about it for a moment.

Does it make sense to you that millions of people could be sent to a supposed "ever-burning hellfire," helplessly and uselessly beating at the flames that threaten to engulf them, shrieking in hideous and all-consuming agony forever and ever and ever — for all eternity, just because a missionary had a flat tire?

Let's follow it further. Perhaps (and this is not so farfetched but that it could have been true), a missionary was striving to reach a tiny Chinese village. Let's assume the missionary ran into trouble with his ancient old Ford automobile, and received a severe tire puncture on the rough and rocky road. Perhaps the missionary labored several hours under the hot sun to repair his tire — arriving at the village several hours later than he had intended. Meanwhile, the elderly grandfather of the family upon which he was about to call had "passed away." Mind you, this missionary was going to bring the "name" of Christ to this isolated Chinese family.

But the grandfather died! All during his lifetime he never once had an opportunity to even hear the name of Christ — let alone hear one word out of the Word of God or one word from a missionary, teacher, preacher, government official, or even a neighbor about his responsibilities before God.

Rather, he had been reared in the Taoist or Buddhist religion.

Does it make sense to your rational mind that this elderly Chinese man would then be doomed to spend all eternity in an ever-burning hellfire because a missionary had a flat tire?

Preposterous!

And so is it preposterous according to your Bible!

No, your God is a just God. He treats all human beings equally. He deals the same way with Chinese as with Africans, the same with Americans as with Britons, the same with Australians as with Germans, and the same with Asians as with Latin Americans!

Those who have never had an opportunity to learn about God's Word and His laws, who have never even

heard the only name whereby man must be saved (Acts 4:12), must have that opportunity.

Religious hobbyists, arguers, scoffers, and bigoted antagonists will oftentimes accuse the Great Creator for this master plan of offering a so-called "second chance"!

With boiling rage, many a religious hobbyist has shrieked his venom at any supposed "second chance"!

But is this a *second* chance? When, pray tell, did these millions of wretched, hapless, disillusioned and illiterate souls ever have a "first" chance?

They never did.

But they will.

How righteous, how just, how merciful, and how perfect is the great plan of God!

What happens, then, if a loved one of yours died not having "understood" much of the Word of God?

The First Chance — for Everyone

Death is *death* — the complete absence of life and consciousness.

Remember, your Bible reveals the "dead know not anything" (Eccl. 9:5). There is *no* consciousness of the passing of time. In the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, the rich man lifted up his eyes in a resurrection — unaware that thousands of years had passed between the time when he died and his yet-future resurrection. (Our free booklet *Is There a Real Hell Fire?* explains this parable in detail. Write for your free copy.)

The majority of those dying today in all nations are not converted!

The majority of those having died through past centuries died with no knowledge of Christ, of the Bible, of the way to salvation.

But they are not hopelessly lost.

They must have their first chance for salvation.

Notice what God says about His own specially chosen people, Israel. "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the *rest were blinded* (according as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they

should *not* see, and ears that they should *not* hear;) *unto this day*" (Rom. 11:7-8).

Are God's own elect (Isaiah 44:1; 45:4) lost forever because God Himself has caused them to be blinded to His truth?

No! Notice the proof: "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness *in part* is happened to Israel, *until* the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom. 11:25).

God has a time schedule He is working out. He will finally give all those ancient Israelites — whose hearts were hardened, who did not know the way to salvation — their *first* chance.

Notice it. "And so all Israel *shall be saved*" (verse 26).

He says further, "For God hath concluded them [shut them up — original] all in unbelief, *that he might have mercy upon all*" (verse 32).

"... God our Saviour; who will have *all men to be saved*, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:3, 4).

Every human being will be given an opportunity to hear and to understand the Word of God. He will then make up his own mind — make his own decision about whether he will obey.

What About Suicide?

And what if someone kills himself?

Will he be resurrected?

Of course! Suicide is *self*-murder. God commands, "Thou shalt not kill" and says the wages of *sin*, which is the breaking of God's Ten Commandments (I John 3:4), is *death* (Rom. 6:23).

In the case of suicide, the penalty is the same as for any other broken law. In the resurrection after the millenium of peace on the earth (Rev. 20:5, the resurrection to judgment) any person having committed suicide will learn the enormity of his sin; will hear the Word of God, just like the millions of others who committed sins, and who died not having the knowledge of the truth.

Is There a Hellfire?

Believe it or not, the Bible shows there must be a *final* resurrection. This time, a resurrection to death — by fire — for those who have deliberately and willfully sinned.

Remember, there are three classes of people with whom God is dealing. Those who have repented, and, whether living or dead, will rise to meet Christ in the air (I Thes. 4:15-18), coming down *on that day* with Him to the mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4) to rule with Him for 1,000 years (Rev. 2:26; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4). Then there are the millions of those who have never understood — the “rest” of the dead (Rev. 20:5).

And then there are those who will not choose to repent — who are finally to lose out on salvation.

Notice the Bible proof!

After the millennium of Christ’s rule on earth, even after the picture of the Great White Throne resurrection to judgment (Rev. 20:11-12), God says: “And death and hell [Greek word, *hades*, meaning “the grave”] were cast into the lake of fire. *This is the second death*” (Rev. 20:14).

A grave is only a grave when it contains a *body*. This scripture speaks of a resurrection to *physical* life for the incorrigible evil, and a *gehenna* fire destroying them.

Read what God inspired the Prophet Malachi to write: “For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall *burn them up* And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet . . .” (Mal. 4:1-3).

The *gehenna* fire of your Bible is much hotter than the pagan myth of an “ever-burning” fire. This fire really burns — it *destroys!*

Remember to write for the free booklet *Is There a Real Hell Fire?* It explains how the rich man comes up in this final resurrection — only to see the advancing wall of flame before him. There is a mighty real fire revealed in the Bible — *gehenna* (Greek word) fire.

Peter said: “But the day of the Lord will come as a

thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with *fervent heat*, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be *burned up*" (II Peter 3:10).

But before giving this awesome warning of impending destruction of the wicked, Peter again shows the righteous mercy of the loving God, who "... is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance" (verse 9).

There is the real truth about death — from your own Bible. Death is *death* — without consciousness. A *resurrection* is the hope of the dead — not living for all eternity in some fanciful "limbo" or compartment of "heaven" or "hell."

The stories you've heard all your life about the boiling pots or the "pearly gates" are sheer myth. But the plain truth of your Bible is clear.

What a great blessing it is to know the truth about death. And how especially comforting is this knowledge when you must literally *see* death come to a loved one.

God's great and merciful purpose in our lives is achieved because Christ conquered death. He will soon *release* those who are "waiting" for their change to come — and that day is much nearer, now, than you may think.